

The Telegraph



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PLEDGES

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not see in tinsel town **P12**

32 PAGES

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2025

Will Neeraj be able to
recreate his magic? **P15**

XXCE

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Delhi mum on 'topple plot' claim in US

In Male, India's 'Coup d'Retreat'

ANITA JOSHUA

New Delhi: India had conspired with the Maldivian Opposition to oust President Mohamed Muizzu, elected in September 2023 on an "India Out" plank, a report in *The Washington Post* has claimed.

The plan, according to the American newspaper, was abandoned after a few months as not enough Maldivian legislators were willing to join the effort to impeach Muizzu, who had asked India to withdraw its soldiers from the archipelago on his first day in office in November 2023.

The external affairs ministry had not commented on the report in the 24 hours since it had been out. *The Telegraph* has not independently verified the report.

In any case, by May 2024, the bilateral relationship was back on track after India extended budgetary support to the Maldives with the rollover of the \$50-million Treasury



Personnel from the Indian Coast Guard and the Maldives National Defence Force during a joint diving exercise to mark a goodwill visit by two ICG ships to the island nation on December 18. (PTI)

Bill for another year on a request from Male.

Agents working at the behest of India's intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), had in January begun quietly discussing with Maldivian Opposition leaders the possibility of removing Muizzu, the *Post* report says quoting people purportedly involved in the alleged discussions.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ►

"And within weeks, a plan emerged," the report says.

"In an internal document titled 'Democratic Renewal Initiative' and obtained by *The Washington Post*, Maldivian opposition politicians proposed bribing 40 members of parliament, including those from Muizzu's own party, to vote to impeach him," it adds.

IMRAN AHMED SIDDIQUE

New Delhi: From mid-morning, the beauty parlour comes alive, the bustle busier than usual and the queues longer. But the women don't mind the wait — they have nowhere else to go.

They are inmates of the women's jail in Tihar, making the most of the authorities' offer to get a spruce-up free of charge for New Year's Eve, to be celebrated perhaps with a bit of singing and dancing.

Services at the beauty parlour, located inside the high walls of the women's prison — Jail No. 6 — range from haircuts, threading and spa sessions to pedicures, manicures, facials and nail polishing.

Jail sources said the beauty parlour remains open from 10am to 2pm every day of the year, the services coming at a charge except for the current New

TIHAR NEW YEAR OFFER: FREE SALON SERVICE

Beauty lies in the eyes of the holder



The beauty parlour at Tihar

Year's Eve offer.

"This offer is limited to a week. The idea is to break the monotony of prison life and allow the women a chance to pamper themselves," a jail warden said.

At the parlour, a pedicure costs just ₹40, a spa session ₹150, a facial ₹80 and threading ₹25. The market rates are up to 10 times higher.

The parlour, the warden said, is run by inmates trained by professionals from Godrej Consumer Products Ltd and Habibs Hair Academy. The training includes modern hairstyling and other beauty therapies, and is imparted as part of a rehab programme to equip the women for a new

life after release.

Those who complete the course are given a certificate — but without mentioning the place of training, to help them escape any stigma and secure jobs after release.

The beauty parlour is well-furnished and air-conditioned with plush velvet armchairs, sleek tables and wooden chairs for customers. Photos of Madhuri Dixit, Aishwarya Rai and Kareena Kapoor liven up its walls.

"The parlour is the most happening and noisiest place inside the women's jail. Who doesn't want to look good?" a prison official said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ►

Mr & Mrs Split: Jolie and Pitt are divorced

Los Angeles: Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt have reached a divorce settlement, apparently ending one of the longest and most contentious divorces in Hollywood history.

Jolie and Pitt signed off on a default declaration filed in Los Angeles Superior Court on Monday, saying they have entered into a written agreement on their marital and property rights. The settlement was first reported by *People* magazine.

"More than eight years ago, Angelina filed for divorce from Mr Pitt," Jolie's attorney, James Simon, said in a statement.

"She and the children left all of the properties they had shared with Mr Pitt, and since that time she has focused on finding peace and healing for their family. This is just one part of a long ongoing process that started eight years ago. Frankly, Angelina is exhausted, but she is relieved this one part is over."

The filing says they give up the right to any future spousal financial support, but gives no



Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie at the AFI Awards in California on January 9, 2015. (Reuters file picture)

other details. A Judge will need to sign off on the agreement.

An email late Monday night to Pitt's attorney seeking comment was not immediately answered.

Jolie, 49, and Pitt, 61, popularly called Brangelina, were among Hollywood's most prominent pairings for 12 years, two of them as a married couple. The Oscar winners have six children together.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ►

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The man who showed S Korea crash to world

SU-HYUN LEE

Seoul: On the morning that the ill-fated Jeju Air flight was headed to its destination in southwestern South Korea, Lee Geun-young was near the airport, getting ready to open a restaurant serving mud-flat octopus, a local delicacy.

Half an hour later, Lee shot videos that were among the first the world saw of the Jeju Air Flight 7C2216 crash that killed all but two of the 181 people on board. In an interview with *The New York Times*, he talked about the challenge of dealing with the shock of what he had seen.

Lee's restaurant, along a road about 300 yards from Muuan International Airport where the plane was about to land, has a clear view of the southern end of the runway, close to the water. Lee, 48, recalled that it was a sunny morning and that he had seen birds at a nearby beach.

'Something wrong'

Around 8.57am, I heard bangs. They sounded like incomplete combustion from motorbikes but louder and unfamiliar... I left my kitchen and went outside to the restaurant parking lot and looked up at the sky. I saw the airplane. It was above my restaurant instead of over the runway. And the plane was tilted a bit to the right. It looked to me like the plane was about

to make a landing, only towards my restaurant rather than toward the runway... I went to the back of my restaurant to watch the back of the plane. The plane was higher in the sky than when I watched it earlier, and as it ascended, it was making a circle toward the right, doing a U-turn. It felt like this circle was a really small one. I felt that there was something definitely wrong with this plane and that I should take a video. That's why I walked up to the rooftop... shot the first video.

One or two seconds after the crash, I felt a sudden rush of heat on my face like you would when you opened the door to a sauna. "Do I need to get out of here?" I thought.

I saw two or three residual blasts during this time. The first blast was so big that I could see fragments spouting... when the smaller blasts occurred, I only saw smoke and flames... the firefighter trucks couldn't go near the site. They spread the water from about 100 to 130 feet away.

'I choke up'

I couldn't sleep last night. Every time I closed my eyes, I kept seeing afterimages of the blast from the crash.... Every time I go on the Internet and see the news of the plane crash or related footage, I choke up.

New York Times News Service

China 'hacks' US treasury department

ANA SWANSON AND DAVID E. SANGER

Washington: One of China's intelligence agencies hacked the US treasury department, gaining access to the workstations of government employees and unclassified documents, the Biden administration said on Monday, the latest in a series of embarrassing surveillance operations against major US institutions.

It was unclear from the treasury's limited first account of the episode exactly what the hackers were seeking. But senior officials with access to the intelligence on the breach said that it appeared to be entirely an espionage operation and not part of other Chinese efforts to insert malicious computer code into utility grids and water supply systems, giving them the capability to shut off critical American infrastructure.

In a letter informing lawmakers of the episode, the treasury department said it had been notified on December 8 by a third-party software service company, BeyondTrust, that the hacker had obtained a security key that allowed it to gain remote access to certain treasury workstations and documents on them.

On Tuesday, a spokesperson for China's foreign ministry, Mao Ning, called the allegation by the US "groundless".

New York Times News Service

Foreign fighters in Syria army

Damascus: Syria's new rulers have installed some foreign fighters including Uyghurs, a Jordanian and a Turk in the country's armed forces as Damascus tries to shape a patchwork of rebel groups into a professional military, two Syrian sources said.

The move to give official roles, including senior ones, to several jihadists may alarm some foreign governments and Syrian citizens fearful about the new administration's intentions, despite its pledges not to export Islamic revolution and to rule with tolerance towards Syria's large minority groups.

A Syrian government spokesperson did not reply to a request for comment on the thinking behind the appointments.

The sources said that out of a total of almost 50 military roles announced by the defence ministry on Sunday, at least six had gone to foreigners.

Reuters was not able to independently verify the nationality of the individuals appointed.

Thousands of Sunnis Muslim foreigners joined Syria's rebels early in the 13-year civil war to fight against the rule of Bashar al-Assad and the Iran-backed Shii'te militias who supported him, giving the conflict a sectarian overtone.

Some foreign fighters formed their own armed groups while others joined established formations such as Islamic State as it rampaged across Iraq and Syria, briefly declaring a so-called caliphate.

New York Times News Service



A nun practises before her performance during the reopening of the nunnery in Kathmandu on Monday. (Reuters)

Kung fu nunnery back in Nepal

Kathmandu: About a dozen nuns performed hand chops and high kicks, some of them wielding swords, as they showed off their martial art skills to hundreds of cheering well-wishers at the long-awaited reopening of their nunnery in Nepal.

In remarks broadcast on Sunday, Sharas said the new Syria "cannot be run by the mentality of groups and militias".

Syria's new rulers, drawn mainly from HTS, have indicated that foreign fighters and their families may be given Syrian citizenship and be allowed to stay in the country because of their contributions to the fight against Assad.

The defence ministry on Sunday announced 49 appointments to the army that included leaders of key Syrian armed factions.

Among them were several foreign fighters, three given the rank of brigadier-general and at least three others the rank of colonel, a Syrian military source said.

"This is a small token of recognition for the sacrifices Islamists Jihadists gave to our struggle for freedom from Assad's oppression," an HTS source said.

REUTERS



The Students Against Discrimination group holds the March for Unity rally in Dhaka on Tuesday. (Reuters)

Dhaka: The interim government in Bangladesh has announced that it will prepare a "proclamation of July uprising", a day after it distanced itself from a proposed declaration with an identical title by the anti-discrimination students movement that led to the ouster of then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina four months ago.

"We hope within a few days the proclamation will be prepared with the participation and consensus of all and presented before the nation," Shafiqul Alam, media secretary to the chief adviser of the interim government of Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus, said in a midnight news conference on Monday.

The group of kung fu nuns, aged from 17 to 30, are members of the 1,000-year-old Drukpa lineage, which gives nuns equal status as monks and is the only female order in the patriarchal Buddhist monastic system.

REUTERS

Usually, nuns are expected to cook and clean and are not allowed to practise any form of martial art. But Gyalwang Drukpa, a monk who ranks only slightly below the Dalai Lama in the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy, decided to train women in kung fu to improve their health and spiritual well-being.

REUTERS

He opened the nunnery in 2009 and it now has 300 members aged between six and 34.

REUTERS

"We do kung fu to keep ourselves mentally and physically fit, and our aim is to promote women's empowerment and gender equality," said Jigme Jangchub Chosdon, 23, a nun who is originally from Ladakh in India.

REUTERS

The nuns come from Bhutan, India and Nepal and are all trained in kung fu, the Chinese martial art for self-defence and strength.

REUTERS

"With the confidence from kung fu, I really want to help the community, young girls to build their own strength," said 24-year-old Jigme Yangchen Gomo, a nun from Ramechhap in Nepal.

REUTERS

The nunnery's website says that the combination of gender equality, physical strength and respect for all living things represents the order's return to its "true spiritual roots".

REUTERS

Jigme Konchok Lhamo, 30, from India, said her main goal was to achieve enlightenment through the principles of the 1972 Constitution (and) the proclamation will make it clear how the Mujibist Constitution destroyed the aspirations of the people and exactly how we want to replace it".

REUTERS

The platform leader said the proclamation was

REUTERS

However, Pakistan's then military junta under General Yahya Khan eventually launched a sudden army crackdown leading to the Liberation War.

The interim government visibly distanced itself from the "proclamation" with Yunus's media secretary saying "the government has nothing to do with it" and "wants to see it (proclamation) as private initiative".

But some leaders of ex-prime minister Khaleda Zia's BNP sharply reacted to the proposal with its highest policy-making standing committee member Mirza Abbas saying the Constitution was written in 1972 at the cost of the blood of three million martyrs.

"As your seniors, we feel disappointed when you (student movement leaders) say the Constitution should be buried. If there is anything bad in the Constitution, it can be amended," he told reporters.

Yunus tribute to Singh

Muhammad Yunus on Tuesday visited India's High Commission in Dhaka and paid tribute to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

"Professor Yunus visited the Indian High Commission in Dhaka and placed a floral wreath at the portrait of the late Indian Prime Minister. He also wrote a message in the condolence book opened at the High Commission," the chief adviser's media wing said in a statement.

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Winner detail taken from Government website.

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● MANIPUR BURNING FOR 20 MONTHS ● AT LEAST 260 DEAD ● OVER 60,000 DISPLACED ● PM UNMOVED

'Whatever happened has happened'

Salt to wound: CM now wants to say sorry



A displaced Kuki family at a relief camp in Manipur's Churachandpur district on July 24 last year. (Reuters picture)

UMANAND JAISWAL

Guwahati: Too little, too late has hardly ever had a more cruel ring to it.

Manipur chief minister N. Biren Singh on Tuesday apologised to the people of his state for the ongoing strife and urged all communities to "forgive and forget past mistakes" and coexist peacefully.

Addressing reporters at the chief minister's bungalow in Imphal, Singh hoped that peace would be restored in 2025 and asserted that dialogue and discussions were the only way to restore normality.

The ongoing conflict between the Meiteis and the Kuki-Zos has killed at least 260 people and displaced over 60,000. Massive deployment of central forces has failed to prevent flare-ups between the two communities, so rives that the valley is out of bounds for the Kukis while the Meiteis cannot enter the hills.

BJP leader Singh, who has been chief minister since 2017, said: "The entire year has been very unfortunate... I want to say sorry to the people of the state for what's happening till today, since last May 3 (2023). Many people lost their loved ones. Many people left their homes. I really regret it. I would like to apologise."

He added: "But now, after seeing the last three-four months' progress towards peace, I hope... that normalcy and peace will be restored in the state in 2025."

"I want to tell all communities of the state that whatever happened has happened. We have to forgive and forget the past mistakes and we have to start a new life (for) a peaceful Manipur; a prosperous Manipur living with all the recognised 34-35 tribes together. We should live together too in the future."

Responding to a media query, Singh said that of all the looted weapons, 2,112 arms had been recovered and 2,511 explosives seized along with 35,000 rounds of ammunition.

In September, Shah had ruled out Singh's resignation and said the Centre was talking to both the communities to ensure lasting peace.

During Shah's visit from May 29 to June 1, 2023, he held more than 15 meetings with government officers, security forces, political leaders and more than 100 members of civil society organisations, the report said.

It said the Centre had taken a series of immediate and sustained actions to handle the situation. Immediate action was initiated by engaging with senior officials of Manipur, progressively deploying addi-



Women stage a protest at Leimakhong in Manipur's Kangpokpi district on November 30. (PTI picture)

been arrested and 12,247 FIRs registered so far.

Claiming "good progress" in tackling law-and-order issues, the chief minister praised the Centre for providing "enough" security personnel and funds to build homes for the displaced families.

Singh also announced a hike in dearness allowance (DA) for government employees to 39 per cent from 33 per cent with effect from January 1 and the introduction of additional flights for a year on the Imphal-Guwa-hati, Imphal-Calcutta and Imphal-Dimapur routes from January.

"The ticket price will be kept under ₹5,000 and the government will bear the excess amount if the price exceeds the stated amount," he said.

He also announced the launch of Aadhaar-linked birth registration in three districts of the state soon.

Highway blockade

The last day of the year saw the Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTu) declare an indefinite economic blockade of NH2 from 4pm following the government's inability to meet its demand for the withdrawal of central forces from Salol in Kuki-Zo majority Kangpokpi district.

Earlier in the day, several Kuki-Zo women were injured during a protest demanding the removal of the armed forces. Security forces used tear gas to disperse the protesters, leaving at least three critically injured, reports from Kangpokpi said.

₹6.6cr fake medicines seized in Calcutta

G.S. MUDUR

New Delhi: Drug regulatory authorities have seized from a wholesale premises facility in Calcutta large quantities of suspected spurious medicines, including purported anti-cancer and anti-diabetes drugs labelled as manufactured in other countries, the health ministry said on Tuesday.

A joint investigation by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and Bengal's Drugs Control Directorate into a firm named Care and Cure for You led to the seizure of the drugs claimed to be produced in Ireland, Bangladesh, Turkey and the US, the ministry said.

The drugs did not have supporting documents to show that they were legitimate imports into India, the ministry said. Without such documentation, the drugs are deemed spurious. Investigators also found empty packing materials, raising concerns over the authenticity of the products, it added.

The authorities, who have estimated the market value of the seized drugs to be ₹6.6 crore, have sent samples for quality testing. Following the investigation, the CDSCO's east zone drug inspector has taken into custody a woman identified as the proprietor of the wholesale firm, the ministry said. Spurious drugs mimic reputable brands, often containing harmful ingredients.

State accounted for 77% of NE unrest: Centre

IMRAN AHMED SIDDIQUI

New Delhi: Manipur, which has been witnessing ethnic unrest for the past 20 months between the majority Meitei and tribal Kuki communities, accounted for 77 per cent of the total violence in the north-eastern region in 2023, according to the latest annual report of the Union home ministry.

As many as 243 violent incidents were reported in the Northeast in 2023, of which 187 were in Manipur, the report said.

The counter-insurgency operations in Manipur resulted in the killing of 33 in-

surgents and the arrest of 184 insurgents, besides the recovery of 49 weapons. Further, 80 cadres of insurgent outfits surrendered with 31 arms, the ministry's 2023-2024 report published on Monday said.

Opposition parties and members of civil society groups have slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "studiously avoiding" a visit to the "most troubled state". Union home minister Amit Shah, who had visited the state in May 2023 and "was supposed to come again after 15 days", did not return.

In June, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat had flagged the Cen-

tre's inaction in the strife-torn northeastern state which has witnessed ethnic violence for over a year, leaving at least 260 dead and over 60,000 displaced.

The annual report said that the rise in violent incidents in Manipur was because of the prevailing ethnic strife between the Meitei and Kuki communities and the resultant increase in casualties among both civilians and security personnel in comparison to 2022.

The report said large-scale ethnic violence erupted between the Meitei and Kuki communities in Manipur on

May 3, 2023. The violence resulted in numerous casualties, injuries and incidents of arson, it added.

Though the issue of violence primarily relates to maintaining public order, which is a state subject, the Centre has been consistently extending its support, as required by the N. Biren Singh government, the report said.

It said the Centre had taken a series of immediate and sustained actions to handle the situation. Immediate action was initiated by engaging with senior officials of Manipur, progressively deploying addi-

tional companies of Central Armed Police Forces, army and Assam Rifles columns, using helicopters and drones and implementing a unified command system, the Centre said.

During Shah's visit from May 29 to June 1, 2023, he held more than 15 meetings with government officers, security forces, political leaders and more than 100 members of civil society organisations, the report said.

Rocked by periodic violent clashes for more than 18 months between the Meiteis and the Kukis, the state has got divided into ethnic enclaves, it

said. Thousands of people are living in emergency shelters, unable to return home because of the ongoing violence.

Security experts have long recommended President's rule in the wake of the violence and alleged mishandling of the crisis by chief minister Singh.

In September, Shah had ruled out Singh's resignation and said the Centre was talking to both the communities to ensure lasting peace.

Responding to a question on the possibility of Modi visiting Manipur, Shah had said: "When he visits the state, it will be known to everyone."

Singh said 625 people had

MSP talk rider to Dallewal medical aid



Pinarayi Vijayan. File picture

Malicious: Kerala CM on Pak tag

CYNTHIA CHANDRAN

Thiruvananthapuram: A day after Maharashtra BJP minister Nitesh Rane termed Kerala a "mini-Pakistan", chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the remark was "deeply malicious and utterly condemnable".

Vijayan said Rane's comment had bared the approach of the Sangh Parivar towards Kerala. He said the comment by Maharashtra fisheries and port minister Rane was part of a "hate campaign" endorsed by the Sangh Parivar against Kerala, which believes in secularism and communal harmony.

"We strongly denounce this attack on Kerala and call upon all democratic and secular forces to unite against the Sangh Parivar's hateful propaganda," Vijayan wrote on X.

Congress leader K.C. Venugopal demanded a response from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and claimed that Rane's remark was an "orchestrated vile campaign". He compared the comments to former CPM statements on the poli victories of Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

The Punjab government had said it faced huge resistance from the protesting farmers who had encircled Dallewal and prevented him from being taken to hospital. The top court had blamed the state government for not doing enough to contain the situation.

his hospitalisation.

Singh sought more time for the state government to comply with the order. He submitted that intervenors and negotiators had tried to follow the court directive by engaging the farmers in a dialogue. Additionally, the state government mobilised 7,000 personnel at the protest site, but farmer organisations' call for a Punjab bandh on Monday hindered its efforts, Singh said.

The bench recorded the submissions and posted the matter on January 2. "We are inclined to accept the request to afford some more time for compliance with the directions issued by the court," the bench said.

Punjab's chief secretary and director-general of police were directed to continue to appear virtually during the hearing.

On December 27, the apex court had asked the state government to deal with troublemakers with "an iron hand", saying it felt they were resisting the availability of medical aid to Dallewal.

The Punjab government had said it faced huge resistance from the protesting farmers who had encircled Dallewal and prevented him from being taken to hospital. The top court had blamed the state government for not doing enough to contain the situation.

"As per the negotiations, there is a proposal given by the farmers to the central government that if they get an invitation for talks, then Dallewal is ready to get medical aid as desired," Punjab advocate-general Gurmeet Singh told a vocation bench of Justices Surya Kant and Sudhanshu Dhulia.

However, the bench said it was only concerned with compliance with its December 20 order by which it had directed the Punjab government to provide medical assistance to Dallewal and decide on

'Male topple plot' finger at India

► FROM PAGE 1

The Post report said: "The document also proposed paying 10 senior army and police officers and three powerful criminal gangs to ensure Muizzi's removal. To pay off the various parties, the conspirators sought 87 million Maldivian rufiyaa, or \$6 million, and according to two Maldivian officials, it would be sought from India. After months of secret talks, the plotters failed to gather enough votes to impeach Muizzi, and India did not pursue or finance an attempt to oust him."

Citing a conversation with an adviser to the Muizzi family, the Post report claims that in January 2024, a senior RAW officer at the Indian embassy in Washington explored a plan to overthrow the Maldivian President with two Indian intermediaries who

had political and business contacts in the Maldives.

"One intermediary was Shirish Thorat, a former Indian police officer who has worked as a private military contractor and who advised Mohamed Nasheed when he was the Maldivian president on how to curb Islamist radicalization," the Post report says.

"The other was Savio Rodrigues, a publisher based in the Indian state of Goa who previously served as a spokesman for India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. When contacted by The Post, Thorat and Rodrigues separately confirmed the existence of plans to remove Muizzi but declined to say whether they were working on the Indian government's behalf."

After the Post report was published, Rodrigues, in a post on X, said: "In an age where narratives are weaponised, the

without hesitation."

The Post report further dwells on the "lengths to which India has gone to prop up one of the country's main parties, the Maldivian Democratic Party, after China forged relations with the MDP's rivals, led by former Maldivian president Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom and his protégé, current president Muizzi".

It adds that India played a role in choosing the MDP's leaders and its candidates for elections.

"During the 2023 presidential election, when Muizzi ran a campaign criticizing Indian influence in the country and raising the banner 'India Out', polling analysts and campaign workers arrived from India to support the MDP's campaign against him, sparking concerns among some Maldivian defense officials," the Post report says.

Tihar New Year offer: Free salon

► FROM PAGE 1

The prison official added: "Usually, the women flock to the parlour during festivals such as Karva Chauth and Diwali, or perhaps before a visit from a relative — even ahead of a court hearing."

The parlour isn't a profit-making venture. Sources said the earnings are used entirely to buy cosmetics and accessories.

Male prisoners at Tihar

have been less lucky so far.

They have ordinary salons catering to them at the 12 jails in the complex, where gov-

ernment barbers cut their hair and shave them free of cost.

"We are planning to set up fancy salons for the men, too, considering the demand from them. The men too want to look good," a jail superintendent said.

In the women's jail, only around 25 to 30 per cent of the nearly 550 inmates are convicts. The rest are accused awaiting trial, mostly in dowry cases. The inmates include several foreigners: many of them from Nigeria, facing drug and fraud charges.

The parlour offers a welcome break from the drear of the overcrowded barracks.

Under the open-jail scheme, well-behaved male and female convicts are allowed to work outside as part of an "open jail" rehab policy. This after Delhi High Court pulled up the jail authorities for discriminating against women convicts as a similar facility had earlier been provided to male inmates.

Since 2019, Tihar has allowed some women convicts to work outside as part of an "open jail" rehab policy. This after Delhi High Court pulled up the jail authorities for discriminating against women convicts as a similar facility had earlier been provided to male inmates.

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The scheme, however, does

Suvendu's NRC pitch to evict infiltrators

SAIBAL GUPTA

Calcutta: The leader of the Opposition, Suvendu Adhikari, has made a fresh push for the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Bengal, claiming it is necessary to identify infiltrators allegedly threatening the safety of society.

"West Bengal is a hub of such illegal immigrants, who have managed to mix with the general population with the help of a certain section of the society, emboldened by the reluctance of the Police in taking any action against them. The ruling party of the State perceive them as electoral assets which help them gain legal impunity," Adhikari wrote on X on Monday night.

"It's high time to implement NRC in WB to weed out these infiltrators who are sharing our resources like parasites and also threatening the security and safety of Indian citizens," he added.

Adhikari provided details of several individuals he claimed were Bangladeshis living in India and engaging in various criminal activities. The Nandigram MLA urged the Union home ministry to initiate a thorough investigation by the NIA or any other agency into such activities.

The NRC, whose creation is mandated by the 2003 amendment to the Citizenship Act, 1955, has the names of all Indian citizens. Its purpose is to document all legal citizens of India so that illegal immigrants can be identified and deported.

Senior Trinamool Congress leader Arup Chakraborty said Mamata Banerjee had already asserted that there would be no NRC in Bengal as long as she was the chief minister. "In this context, I would like to ask one question to Suvendu Adhikari. From where will the NRC start? From the house of former Union minister Nitish Adhikari or former Tripura chief minister Biplob Deb — they all have their roots in Bangladesh," added Chakraborty.

Gadkari urges CM to pave way for highways

PRANESH SARKAR

Calcutta: Union road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari has written to chief minister Mamata Banerjee, urging her to intervene and facilitate the acquisition of land for 20 major national highway projects in Bengal, said a source.

The letter added that implementation of projects was facing "substantial delays" over problems related to land acquisition, the source added.

"I have been informed that in West Bengal, 9 projects are under DPR (detailed project report) and 11 projects costing ₹8,003.14 crore are under different stages of implementation. However, these projects are facing substantial delays due to pending approvals from district authorities for critical activities like land acquisition, forest clearance, utility shifting, etc," reads the letter.

Sources in the state government said that the implementation of the projects was vital to upgrade infrastructure in the state.

The total cost would be much higher than ₹8,000 crore, a source said, explaining that the estimated cost for another nine projects, for which the DPR was being prepared, would be added to the amount mentioned by Gadkari.

"This huge investment will boost the economy of the remote areas," said a senior government official.

In his letter, Gadkari said projects — by both the NHAI and the state PWD — had been facing several kinds of land acquisition-related problems. He urged Mamata's intervention for speedy clearances to get work started.

However, a source said it was unlikely that land acquisition would gain momentum before the 2026 Assembly polls as it was a "sensitive" issue for the Bengal government.

'No reply' to plea for help to protect minority rights in Bangladesh Monk's lawyer flags 'mum' Modi

SNEHAMOY CHAKRABORTY

Calcutta: Rabindra Ghosh, a Bangladeshi lawyer attacked by radical Islamists while he was trying to move a bail plea for Hindu monk Chinnoy Krishna Das in Chittagong, said on Tuesday that he had not received a reply to a letter he sent to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"This time (over the arrest of the Hindu monk) we wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his help to protect the rights of minorities. I mentioned several other minority communities in Bangladesh... However, I am yet to receive any reply from the Indian Prime Minister,"

"The Union government has to do something to prevent attacks on minorities in Bangladesh and provide them with legal assistance. The whole world knows that the Hindu monk has been arrested and jailed in Bangladesh and he is not getting justice. Now, if his lawyer does not get a reply from the Prime Minister, then questions can be raised about the BJP's true intent."

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The Telegraph

BUSINESS

CALCUTTA WEDNESDAY 1 JANUARY 2025

“ AI, IoT-enabled appliances will shape consumer preferences in 2025

Pradeep Bakshi, Voltas, MD & CEO



EV player Ather set to take IPO ride

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mumbai: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has given the go-ahead for the initial public offer (IPO) of Ather Energy. It will be the second pure play EV firm after Ola Electric Mobility to get listed on the bourses.

Ather Energy had filed its draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) in September and it received the observation letter on December 23.

In Sebi parlance, obtaining observations means its go-ahead to float public issues.

Ather Energy's proposed IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth ₹3,100 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of 2.2 crore equity shares by promoters and investors' shareholders.

Proceeds from the fresh

MONEY TALK

- Second EV firm after Ola Mobility to tap markets
- Fresh issue of equity shares of ₹3,100cr
- Will set up a factory in Maharashtra
- Leela Hotels parent to enter market

rounding Trump's economic policies and high valuation may impact the stock market in the short term, particularly in emerging markets.

"There are no signs of recession, though tapering could influence valuations. A balanced approach, including specific stocks and sectors, along with investments in gold, silver, and debt instruments, is essential for portfolio stability," the brokerage said.

It is forecasting a base target of 26300 for December 2025 suggesting a moderate return of around 11 per cent from the current levels supported by expected earnings revamp from Q3.

Swapan Aggarwal, director, VSRK Capital, said as investors approach 2025, the domestic stock market could see a year of moderate growth, with sector-specific opportunities in capital goods and infrastructure, financial services, IT, healthcare and pharmaceuticals.

Investors should approach the market with caution, balancing the opportunities with the inherent risks. Overall, 2025 promises sector-specific growth, but careful navigation of the market will be key to successful investing", he said.

Investors on edge in New Year

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mumbai: Stock markets bid goodbye to 2024 on a not so good note with the benchmark Sensex ending lower 109 points and experts forecasting moderate returns in 2025.

In the last session of 2024, the 30-share Sensex plummeted 587.34 points to touch a low of 77560.79. However, it recouped part of these losses to end with a loss of 109.12 points or 0.14 per cent at 78139.01. On the NSE, the broader Nifty 50 fell marginally 0.10 points to settle at 23614.80.

In 2024, the Sensex jumped 589.75 points thereby giving a return of 8.16 per cent whereas the Nifty surged 1913.4 points or 8.80 per cent.

However, the broader markets have again outperformed with the Nifty midcap 50 index rising 21 per cent, the Nifty smallcap 50 index 25.3 per cent and the Nifty 100, 20.04 per cent.

Last year, the benchmark indices had shown solid gains when they jumped 18.8 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively, over 2022.

The relatively lower returns have been attributed to expensive valuations, muted

KEY TRIGGERS: INDIA INC RESULTS, TRUMP POLICIES, BUDGET

NSE 100 GAINERS

Trent	133%
Zomato	125%
M&M	74%
Vedanta	72%
Info Edge India	68%
Siemens	63%
Bharat Electronics	59%
JSW Energy	57%
Divis Laboratories	56%
Samvardhana Motherson	53%

Chart: Pinali Ghosh; Source: NSE EquityMaster

Indiavision	53%
IndusInd Bank	40%
Adani Green Energy	35%
Asian Paints	33%
Adani Total Gas	23%
Nestle	18%
Avenue Supermarkets	13%
Hindustan Unilever	11%
Tata	11%
Adani Enterprises	10%
Shree Cement	10%

Chart: Pinali Ghosh; Source: NSE EquityMaster

NSE 100 LOSERS

Indiavision	53%
Adani Green Energy	40%
Asian Paints	35%
Adani Total Gas	33%
Nestle	23%
Avenue Supermarkets	18%
Hindustan Unilever	13%
Tata	11%
Adani Enterprises	11%
Shree Cement	10%

will be followed by Infosys on January 16.

While the third quarter is a seasonally weak period for IT companies, analysts remain divided on whether October-December 2024 will show some improvement for other sectors on a sequential basis.

Twin developments

The earnings season will also coincide with Trump taking charge as the 47th President of the United States. Reverberation of his policies will be felt on riskier assets such as stocks and even the rupee.

This will be followed by

the Union budget. The hope is that finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will address the issue of a slowdown in urban demand by giving tax reliefs.

The stock markets are also expecting that she will give some good news on long-term capital gains tax (LTCG).

For now, brokerages are

projecting that the Nifty could rise 8-10 per cent in 2025. While Citi has a December 2025 target of 25000, it is 27,000 for Goldman Sachs, 26500 for Bank of America Merrill Lynch and 26600 for Jefferies.

A note from Geojit Securi-

ties says the uncertainty sur-

CURRENCIES

US \$	₹85.61
UK Pound	₹107.49
Euro	₹89.20

INDICES

BSE	Sensex	NSE
Sensex	78139.01	-109.12
Midcap	45444.68	+58.31
Smallcap	55180.60	+391.16
NSE		
Nifty	23614.80	-188.50
Nifty 50	68063.80	-493.35
Nifty 500	22357.15	-66.05

Most active on NSE

Script	Price*	Traded value*
ITI	386	₹24,641
RITES	291	₹1715.02
HDIL	1772	₹1251.54
Unimach	1385	₹1170.78
MobilKwik	590	₹1094.92

*in ₹; # in ₹

COMMODITIES

Gold (10 gram in ₹)	78350	—
Pure	78250	—
Hallmark	72950	—
Silver (kg in ₹)	82250	-1450
Bar	86350	-1450
Portion	86350	-1450
Crude*	6098	+44
Copper*	795	-660

*per barrel in ₹; # per kg in ₹

MONEY MARKET

Yield (%)	5.10-7.00
Call rate	5.10-7.00
91-day T-Bill	6.74
1-year Gilt	6.80
5-year Gilt	6.84
10-year Gilt	6.87

IN BRIEF

Small savings rate

■ NEW DELHI: The Centre has left the interest rates unchanged on various small savings schemes, including PPF and NSC, for the fourth straight quarter beginning January 1. The interest rates for PPF and post office savings deposit schemes have been retained at 7.1 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively.

IT returns

■ CALCUTTA: The last date for filing belated return and revised return for assessment year 2024-25 has been extended by 15 days from 31st December 2024 to 15th January 2025.

WhatsApp UPI

■ MUMBAI: India on Tuesday delayed the implementation of market share caps for digital payments interface UPI by two years, a move that will benefit Google Pay and Walmart-backed PhonePe.

Gold, a safe-haven bet, is likely to continue its record-smashing journey in the New Year, rising to ₹85,000 per 10 grams and even ₹90,000 level if geopolitical tensions and global economic uncertainties continue.

Also adding the run is a dovish tilt in monetary policy and buying by central banks, but if the geopolitical crisis eases, the precious metal will turn weak on a depreciating rupee.

Gold price is hovering at ₹79,350 per 10 grams in spot markets at present, and ₹76,500 per 10 grams in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).

The precious metal capped off 2024 on a strong note with its best performance, notching 23 per cent returns in the domestic markets. The yellow metal hit an all-time high of ₹82,400 per 10 grams on October 30 this year. Silver mirrored this stellar performance with a 30 per cent gain, surpassing the ₹1 lakh level per kg.

Globally, Comex gold futures started the year at around \$2,062 per ounce and

YELLOW SHINE

- Geo-political tensions and global uncertainties push up prices
- Central bank buying aiding surge
- Silver prices forecast to touch ₹1.25 lakh
- Some experts warn uncertainty premium is fading

rallied to a peak of \$2,790 per ounce on October 31, giving returns of up to 28 per cent, reinforcing their appeal amid global uncertainties.

Experts believe that precious metals remain strong performers in 2025 as well, buoyed by geopolitical tensions, central bank purchases, and a pivot towards lower interest rates by major central banks.

The outlook for gold in 2025 remains positive, though the pace of growth may moderate compared to 2024, LKP Securities VP Research Analyst Jiteneet Trivedi said.

Com



mani
SQUARE

Unbox the New Year

Surprises, Style & Smiles Awaits

2025

Happy
New Year

SHOP, EAT & CELEBRATE



For details call: **9831489780**

mani RETAIL
changeforgood

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HURT AS
VEHICLE
HITS BIKE
ON SETU

The Telegraph NO ONE KNOWS OUR CITY BETTER

METRO

PEDESTRIAN INJURED AS BUSES RACE P9 • CHUNKS FALL OFF DURGAPUR BRIDGE AFTER FIRE P10

CALCUTTA WEDNESDAY 1 JANUARY 2025

XXCE

IN BRIEF

App cab hits bike

BEHALA: A pillion rider on a motorcycle was injured after an app cab hit the two-wheeler on James Long Sarani on Tuesday afternoon. Joyeeta Das, 38, was admitted to hospital.

Fire in room

SURVEY PARK: A room in a three-storey residential building caught fire in Santoshpur early on Tuesday. Three fire tenders doused the flames. No one was injured.

YESTERDATE

January 1, 1846

On this day, Barasat Government School, which later came to be known as Barasat Peary Charan Sarkar High School, was set up by its founder-headmaster Peary Charan Sarkar.

Scholar, teacher and champion of women's rights, Sarkar founded another school in the area the following year. With brothers Nabin Krishna Mitra and Kalikrishna Mitra providing financial support, Sarkar set up a school for girls that was later renamed Kalikrishna Girls' High School.

John Elliot Drinkwater Bethune was impressed by this school before he started Bethune School for girls in Calcutta.

Sarkar worked as the headmaster of Barasat Government School till 1854, when he was appointed headmaster of Colootollah School, later Hare School.

Sarkar is also the author of *First Book*, a primary English textbook that was widely read for a long time.

Chandrima S. Bhattacharya
For suggestions on dates/
events mail us at:
yesterdate@abp.in

WEATHER

YESTERDAY

Maximum: 22.6°C (-2.8)
Minimum: 17.3°C (+3.5)
RAINFALL: Nil

HUMIDITY: Max: 92%,
Min: 63%

THE FORECAST

Maximum: 24°C **Minimum:** 16°C

EXPECTED:

Mainly clear sky

SUNSET

5.03pm

SUNRISE

6.16am

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Mob attack vehicles after accident in Ultadanga

Race between buses injures pedestrian

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Ultadanga: Two buses racing along a busy road in Ultadanga left a pedestrian critically injured and triggered a mob fury on Tuesday morning, police said.

The accident happened at the crossing of Murarpukur Road and Ultadanga Main Road, near Telengabagan, around 10.45am on Tuesday, the police said.

The buses were moving towards Ultadanga station.

One of the buses hit a woman, who the police said was trying to cross the road.

The woman, Anima Dutta, 62, is a resident of Canal Circular Road in Duttabagan. She has been admitted to RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

The drivers have been arrested and charged with rash and negligent driving, an officer said.

"This (buses involved in racing to pick up more passengers) is a regular practice. Buses and autorickshaws often cause accidents in the area but police are doing nothing to stop them," said an angry commuter who lives in the area.

A mob smashed the wind-screens of the two buses and



The buses after the accident on Tuesday. Picture by Pradip Sanyal

damaged the seats.

One of the buses was on the Bagbazar-Garia route and the other was on the Howrah-Basat route.

Eye-witnesses said the wheels of one of the "racing" buses went over the woman's waist. She was unconscious while being shifted to the hospital.

In 2023, almost 15 per cent of the total road accidents in the city were caused by buses. According to police records, pedestrians are most vulnerable to accidents. Of the 189 people who died in road accidents in Calcutta in 2023, 73 were pedestrians.

Senior officers of Kolkata Police said vehicles as well as pedestrians need to follow traffic rules to avoid accidents.

"It is vital that vehicles follow traffic rules. But pedestrians, too, should follow rules and desist from Jaywalking or crossing roads when the signal for vehicles is green," said an assistant commissioner in the traffic department of the city police.

Buses are major violators of traffic norms as they stop at will to pick up and drop off passengers. They are also often driven recklessly to pick up more passengers than other buses on the route.

KINSUK BASU

Calcutta: More than 7,000 motorists were prosecuted across Calcutta for violating traffic signals and over 4,500 were penalised for driving two-wheelers without wearing a helmet between December 27 and 30, figures released by Kolkata Police showed.

The figures showed that prosecutions for drink driving were the fewest — 237 — out of the 46,000-odd cases recorded in the four days in the areas under the 26 traffic guards of the city police.

The highest number of

cases of helmetless riding — 1,523 — was recorded on December 30. The highest number of signal violation cases — 1,983 — was recorded on December 27.

Driving without a helmet attracts a fine of ₹1,000, while jumping traffic signals costs a motorist ₹500 the first time and ₹1,500 for subsequent violations.

The figures suggest that the awareness of not driving in a drunken state has increased, particularly among revellers, during the festive time. A section of motorists tends to flout rules but we urge them not to do so at

the cost of risking their lives and that of their close ones," said a senior officer at Kolkata Police headquarters in Lalbazar.

"The drive will continue. We will step up our vigil and campaign."

During the period, over 2,000 motorists were prosecuted for speeding. The fine for overspeeding for two-wheelers and cars is ₹1,000 for the first time and ₹2,000 for subsequent violations.

Officers said cases of overspeeding were mostly recorded at night on some key roads, including EM Bypass, the Rashbehari connector,

AJC Bose Road and Diamond Harbour Road. The highest number of cases of overspeeding — 613 — was recorded on December 29.

"The number of surveillance cameras has increased. So have physical checks involving teams of officers. All traffic guards have been instructed not to conduct *naka* checks during special night raids at specific locations so that motorists can't get away with violations. The police teams on duty to check motorists will change locations in each traffic guard area," the officer said.

Besides drink driving,

speeding and jumping signals, cases were also recorded for using mobile phones while driving, riding two-wheelers with more than one pillion rider, violating "No Entry" signs and rash driving.

"We have instructed clubs

to make separate arrangements to accommodate more cars for their visitors since several stretches will be declared 'No Parking' zones on the first day of the year as part of police arrangements to control crowds on New Year's Eve and January 1," said a senior officer of the South Traffic Guard.

FLOUT FIGURES

(December 27 to 30)

■ Total prosecutions: 45,927
■ Traffic signal violations: 7,166
■ Riding two-wheelers without wearing a helmet: 4,609
■ Speeding: 2,261
■ Drink driving: 237
■ Rash driving: 536

Source: Kolkata Police

46,000 prosecuted for traffic rule violations

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Source: Kolkata Police

Doctors end sit-in, vow to intensify protests

SUBHAJOY ROY AND SAMARPITA BANERJEE

Calcutta: The Joint Platform of Doctors (JPD) ended its sit-in protest on the RG Kar issue at Esplanade on Tuesday.

JPD members, who had earlier spoken about extending their sit-in beyond December 31, said they would intensify their protests and have plans to take the movement to Delhi.

The protest in the Metro Channel, the stretch of Chowringhee Road opposite Metro cinema, began on December 20. The protest deadline was extended once by Calcutta High Court.

Punyabrata Goon, another JPD member, said they have plans to take the protests to New Delhi, but when and how have not been decided yet.

Chaudhuri said the sit-in was hamstrung by the high court's restriction on the strength of the gathering. "We could not ask more people to

"We did not seek another extension because we found that despite continuing the sit-in for 10 days, the state government was completely indifferent to our demands. We will now intensify our protests and force the government to act," said Tamons Chaudhuri, a JPD member.

Punyabrata Goon, another JPD member, said they have plans to take the protests to New Delhi, but when and how have not been decided yet.

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A torch rally at Esplanade demanding justice for the RG Kar rape-and-murder victim on Tuesday evening.
Picture by Bishwanup Datta

come as it would have violated the court's order. The curb impacted the spontaneity of the protests," Chaudhuri said.

The JPD has three demands:

■ The CBI must submit a supplementary chargesheet against former RG Kar principal

pal Sandip Ghosh and former Tala police station officer in-charge Abhijit Mandal in connection with the rape and murder of a junior doctor at the hospital on August 9.

■ The state government must allow the prosecution of Ghosh and former RG Kar house staff Ashis Pandey in a case related to alleged financial irregularities at RG Kar.

■ Those involved in an alleged larger conspiracy behind the rape and murder be brought within the purview of the probe.

Kolkata Police had initially denied permission for the sit-in when the JPD sought

their consent in mid-December. The JPD then petitioned the high court, which gave the nod but added that the size of the gathering could not exceed 250. The court also announced a curb on the size of the area that could be cordoned off because of the sit-in.

The court later said no more than 100 people could gather at the protest site.

The police turned down the JPD's request for permission to extend the deadline of the protest citing the high court's order that the sit-in could continue till December 26. The platform then approached the high court and got an extension.

	छावनी परिषद बैरकपुर CANTONMENT BOARD, BARRACKPORE TATI SHIKSHA, RYTHU SHIKSHA MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, GOVT. OF INDIA 77, MIDDLE ROAD, BARRACKPORE, KOLKATA- 700129 Ph.: (033) 254 80224448, E-mail : canton-shd@nic.in Web : www.barrackpore.cant.gov.in	
No. C/IV/10/PMM/VOL-II/374	Date : 30.12.2024	
PUBLIC NOTICE		
Following person/persons claim mutation of name in respect of the holding as mentioned below within the Barrackpore Cantonment.		
Sl. No.	Name of applicant claiming mutation	Holding No.
1	Sibbu Sarkar	Holding No. 38, Chappar Mahal, Sader Bazar, Barrackpore, North 24 Parganas, Property ID-PT-CB-BARR-2021-07-09-009951.
Objection, if any, may be filed with documentary evidences within 30 days of publication of this notice, failing which the mutation for the purpose of taxation may be accorded under section 81 of the Cantonments Act, 2006.		
Sd/- Chief Executive Officer Cantonment Board, Barrackpore		

	छावनी परिषद बैरकपुर CANTONMENT BOARD, BARRACKPORE TATI SHIKSHA, RYTHU SHIKSHA MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, GOVT. OF INDIA 77, MIDDLE ROAD, BARRACKPORE, KOLKATA- 700129 Ph.: (033) 254 80224448, E-mail : canton-shd@nic.in Web : www.barrackpore.cant.gov.in	
No. C/IV/10/PMM/VOL-II/349	Date : 30.12.2024	
PUBLIC NOTICE		
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Sl. No.	Name of applicant claiming mutation	Holding No.
1	Sambhu Nath Dutta, Ayan Dutta	Holding No. 77, Lakri Mahal, Orderly Bazaar, Barrackpore, North 24 Parganas, Property ID-PT-CB-BARR-2021-07-09-011253.
Objection, if any, may be filed with documentary evidence within 30 days of publication of this notice, failing which the mutation for the purpose of taxation may be accorded under section 81 of the Cantonments Act, 2006.		
Sd/- Chief Executive Officer Cantonment Board, Barrackpore		

	छावनी परिषद बैरकपुर CANTONMENT BOARD, BARRACKPORE TATI SHIKSHA, RYTHU SHIKSHA MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, GOVT. OF INDIA 77, MIDDLE ROAD, BARRACKPORE, KOLKATA- 700129 Ph.: (033) 254 80224448, E-mail : canton-shd@nic.in Web : www.barrackpore.cant.gov.in	
No. C/IV/10/PMM/VOL-II/361	Date : 30.12.2024	
PUBLIC NOTICE		
Following person/persons claim mutation of name in respect of the holding as mentioned below within the Barrackpore Cantonment.		
Sl. No.	Name of applicant claiming mutation	Holding No.
1	Prabhat Kumar Yadav	Holding No. 2, Loolary Mahal, Orderly Bazaar, Barrackpore, North 24 Parganas, Property ID-PT-CB-BARR-2021-07-09-010938.
Objection, if any, may be filed with documentary evidence within 30 days of publication of this notice, failing which the mutation for the purpose of taxation may be accorded under section 81 of the Cantonments Act, 2006.		
Sd/- Chief Executive Officer Cantonment Board, Barrackpore		

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11, including apartment staff, held ₹1cr jewellery theft from trader home

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

Chetla: Diamond ornaments and other valuables worth more than around ₹1 crore were reported missing from the south Calcutta apartment of a city businessman.

Police arrested 11 people, including four employees at the house who had allegedly been stealing ornaments gradually and replacing them with imitation jewellery.

Those arrested included two housekeeping staff, a cook and a nanny.

The cops said the thefts were carried out over several months.

Amit Singh, the businessman, had lodged two complaints with Chetla police station last week.

The theft was detected recently when the family, residing in an apartment in a high-rise on Raja Santosh Roy Road in Chetla, realised that a diamond-encrusted bracelet and a pair of diamond earrings were missing from the house.

One of the complaints the family lodged was against Sanjari Naskar, housekeeping staff; Jhuma Das, a nanny working in the house; and Supriya Purkait, who worked as a cook in the house.

During questioning, the trio reportedly admitted to their crime and said another employee, Saraswati Das, was also involved in the theft. The four were arrested.

The arrests were made earlier in December and all four are in police custody.

"The family lodged a second complaint reporting the theft of several other valuables from the house, including silver utensils, gold and silver coins, some rare coins and a diamond ring — whose total worth is more than ₹1 crore," said an officer at Chetla police station.

During the investigation and based on the statements of the accused, the police conducted a raid at the Metiabruz home of Das, the nanny, and recovered a portion of the stolen booty on Monday.

Based on information gathered during the interrogation of the accused, the cops learnt that a portion of the stolen booty was sold to several receivers across the city.

Multiple raids were conducted in the Metiabruz, Watgunge and Girish Park police station areas. Seven more people, who the police said had bought the stolen articles, were arrested on Monday night.

The police identified them as Priyanka Das, Rumi Singh, Ashok Jana, Sanat Fadikar, Prasenjit Manna, Tanmay Ojha and Mihir Raha.

On Tuesday, the seven were produced in court and remanded in police custody.

Senior officers involved in the probe said one should hire household help after proper background checks.

"One should be very careful while recruiting people at home. Outsiders should be trusted only to a certain extent and it is important to inform the local police station about the staff the family is recruiting," said an officer at Lalbazar.

TENDER

PASCHIM BARDHAMAN ZILLA PARISHAD

Asansol Corrigendum Notice

Corrigendum to Notice No. e-NIT No.47 of 2024-2025 Mmno No. 5324e-NITPSBZP dated 20-12-2024 (regarding Extension of technical bid and financial bid) Please visit to the website www.tenders.gov.in for details. Intending contractors may also contact Engineering deptl of this office and office notice board.

Sd/-
Additional Executive Officer
Paschim Bardhaman Zilla Parishad

Narayapur on 28/12/2024 vide G.D. No.1258/24. If found inform Paraj Barman within seven days.
Enrolment No. WB-1576/2003, Mob. No. 9831141856,
ANB/ABM/2024

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BLAME GAME

The sharp economic slowdown in the second quarter — with the pace of growth tumbling to a seven-quarter low of 5.4% in July-September — has come as a huge embarrassment for the Narendra Modi government. So it is not surprising that it is scouting for a scapegoat that it can pin the blame on. Relations between the finance ministry and the Reserve Bank of India have been frosty for a while, especially after the former RBI governor, Shaktikanta Das, and the other members of the Monetary Policy Committee chose to ignore the broad hints from Raisina Hill to cut interest rates and spur growth. The department of economic affairs clearly had its knives out for the RBI when it said in its economic report for November that "the combination of monetary policy stance and macroprudential measures by the central bank may have contributed to the demand slowdown."

Finance ministry bureaucrats and the sages on Mint Street have been at odds over the conduct of monetary policy for a very long time. The RBI has consistently maintained that the inflation-targeting objective embedded in its policy mandate enjoins it to focus on price stability without imperilling growth. It is a tricky balance but the RBI has managed to do this pretty well. The central bank had embarked on a cycle of rate cuts a year ahead of the Covid pandemic when growth had started to slow but inflation was well within its 2%-6% tolerance band. It would be reckless to adopt the same strategy now when the upside risks to inflation persist. Critics of the Modi government may find it galling that the Centre has ascribed the slowdown in demand to the RBI's macroprudential measures. The RBI has been justifiably alarmed by the surge in unsecured lending by banks. It recently threatened to clamp regulatory restrictions on this category of loans if the banks fail to limit their exposures to unsecured credit. It has also tightened provisioning requirements for banks to head off any looming risk of bad loans. The good news is that gross non-performing assets are down to a 12-year low at 2.6%. The government needs to recognise that demand has slowed because of stagnant wages and elevated household borrowings. The savings rate dipped to a five-year low of 5.2% of GDP in fiscal 2024. The only way out is for the government to increase its capital spending, which the finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, is reluctant to do as she struggles to hold fiscal deficit to 4.9% this year. A blame game is the last thing India needs now.

RISK PROOFING

India is experiencing a digital revolution but this transformation comes with its own challenges, such as the surge in cybercrimes. Recent data reveal a troubling trend: between January and April of this year, Indian citizens suffered financial losses exceeding Rs 1,750 crore due to various cyber offenses. During the same period, more than 7,40,000 complaints were filed on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal. It is thus encouraging that insurance companies are now offering policies to safeguard people against cyber fraud. Cyber insurance, available for both corporates and individuals, essentially provides a financial buffer against the crippling costs associated with data breaches and cyber-attacks and can be customised as per the requirement. Unauthorised transactions involving bank accounts, credit or debit cards — these already have a level of protection from banks — are covered and people can even insure themselves against cyber-bullying too. But what is not insured are cases of fraud where there is active participation of the victim — that is, say, if a person falls prey to a hoax call and sends money or personal details oneself. This is termed as 'gross negligence' by insurance companies and is excluded from coverage. The digitisation of public services is progressing at an explosive pace but people's awareness of the perils of the process remains sketchy. Can the consumer then be blamed for being unable to tell real from fake? This aspect must be taken into consideration by insurance companies and policy regulators.

Prevention though is better than retrieving losses. India boasts the second-largest population of active internet users. Yet most of them remain inadequately informed about online fraud, leaving them vulnerable to scammers. Threats such as privacy violations and sextortion are also becoming increasingly common. In this rapidly evolving digital world, it is crucial to develop a thorough understanding of cyber risks and take steps to counter them. Awareness campaigns are essential, particularly for new and younger internet users. At the same time, legal gaps must be addressed to prevent such crimes — the Digital Personal Data Protection Act passed in 2023 is not enough to protect Indians. There, though, must be a balance between preventing cybercrimes and avoiding excessive regulation. Policy must keep this dimension in mind while framing deterrents.

SCRIPPSI

"The essence of all beautiful art, all great art, is gratitude."

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

The calendar rehearses death soundlessly Time tiptoes

SUMANA ROY

My six-year-old niece pronounces 'entry' as 'en-try', as with all little students, she's been coaxed and pampered with the word, 'try'. Soon there's another word for her to read: 'exit'. We are in a mall, where she's tried to read the signages that announce shops and their intent. Both the words are unfamiliar to her — when I tell her their meanings, she's surprised that 'entry' and 'exit' could be so close to each other, in parallel queues. I look at her — something inside me is coagulating into tears — it'll take her a lifetime to understand and measure the distance between 'entry' and 'exit' in different spaces: homes, workplaces, relationships. I can't tell her any of this, of course. She's happy with a lollipop that she hopes will never 'end'.

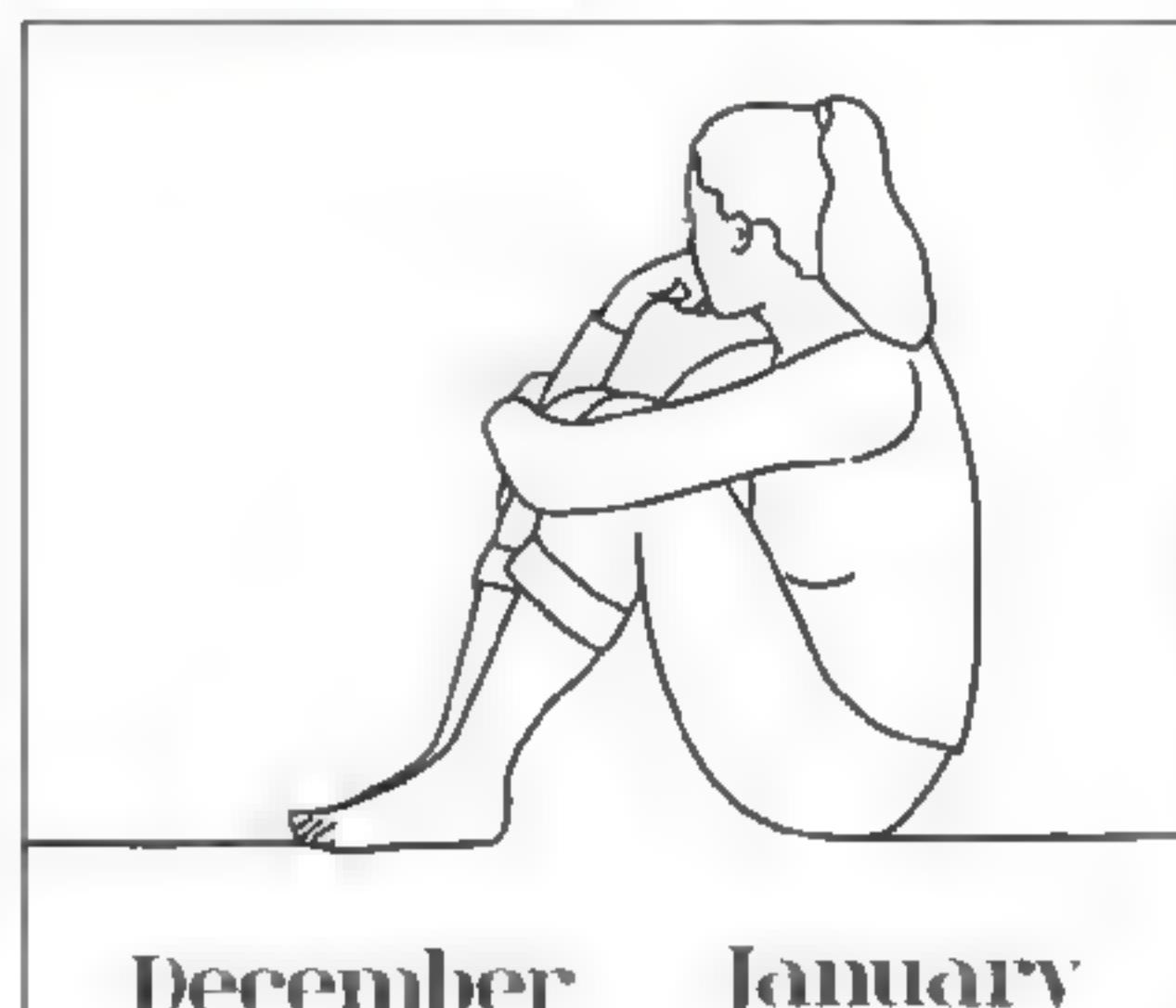
"How old is the lollipop inside my mouth?" she asks. "When is its birthday?"

Did questions such as these ever occur to those who imagined the calendar as a space to deposit and arrange their time? I say "deposit" because that is what it feels like to me — our insect-life of collecting time, involuntary and yet compulsive. For objects of a certain kind, architecture, and tradition, we use words that treat the accumulated years with the kind of reverence that financial institutions pay to interest earned on money. We are loathe to use such energetic words for humans and other living beings — time seems like a burden, an instinct that is held in a phrase such as 'take years off', as if it were something to rid oneself of, like disease. We are not art which time allows the opportunity to marinade into something more than itself, to become what is called, for instance, a 'classic'. We are machines, which, with 'wear and tear', lose efficiency and function we have expiry dates. Does the calendar reflect that?

Time is like art — it has no compulsion to pay obeisance to efficiency. I sometimes wonder what the sense of a 'year' might have looked like had our form and constitution been like art. Imagine a year that derives its form from, say, the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. What might the duration and the units of such a calendar be — day, week, month, year, what other units? What could a calendar look like if it had been structured from the same impulse as a lyric poem? Or the lifespan of a dream? Why does the imagination fail to think of time outside readymade units? To think of the life of a work of art as the length of a calendar year would distort most of the social apparatuses that keep institutions and the stock exchange in power (imagine, for instance, what would happen to the 'school calendar' if there was no time infrastructure of the kind that runs and codes our lives.)

The logic of calendars is an import from the seasons, the agricultural cycle, the shape and behaviour of the moon,

Sumana Roy is a poet and author



December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

the woman's menstrual cycle (which leads us to speculate whether drafts of the kind of calendar we use might have been first created by women, a proposition put forward by the ethno-mathematician, Claudia Zaslavsky, by studying the Ishango Bone from 20,000 years ago), from cycles of abstention and immersion, attachment and detachment... In a calendar is a rhythm of work and pause, the spine bent working, the head surveying the horizon, the white breath amidst the blue and red trafficsigns of numbers imprisoned in squares inside rectangles, as if Time was a Kandinsky canvas. Money, though, has no spine, nor does it need rest. It works tirelessly, even as we sleep — the market is its gym and, if the calendar were to be imagined into being today, its form would derive from the shrewdness of money, which knows neither end nor death, which reproduces by defying all documented manners of reproduction. The mall — and even the corporatised nursing home — feels like that too, indifferent to the pulse of work and waiting, life and leaving. Waiting for my mother's appointment with a doctor in the geriatric wing of a clinic, I try to imagine an adult mayfly's calendar; its lifespan of a day, I also think of Gingko biloba trees, some of which can live up to 3,000 years.

The calendar is art, conceptual art that compels us to imagine life and its obverse. It is art that is provocative, but, because it's gentle and comes to us in the form and structure of numbers, we accept it with the kind of happy resignation that parents accept the growing height of their children. Having come to think of life as a continuous process of rehearsal, not necessarily as preparation but more as repetition, the occasional unease I feel about the calendar perhaps has to do with its form. The calendar rehearses death, but without the sound of crying. We are biologically conditioned to acknowledge the singularity of death: the calendar frustrates that attestation. Moments of grateful ebullience make us sprint towards phrases like 'a second life' — the calendar, by returning with variants of the same form, as if Time were a draft that needs annual editing, gives us an intimation of the end, while clarifying why we cannot use a phrase like 'second death'. We think it is life that gives us our history. It is perhaps death that makes us belong to history. All history is a registering of death, of our extinction, as species and as individuals. It is not that we honour our commitment to history by dying, we only stop being employees of history by retiring from life.

Death must have an audience, like life does. That is why we spectate on the lastnight of the year, aware that, like the 'entry' and 'exit' signs on the malls, life and death are neighbours, like the 1st of January is to the 31st of December.

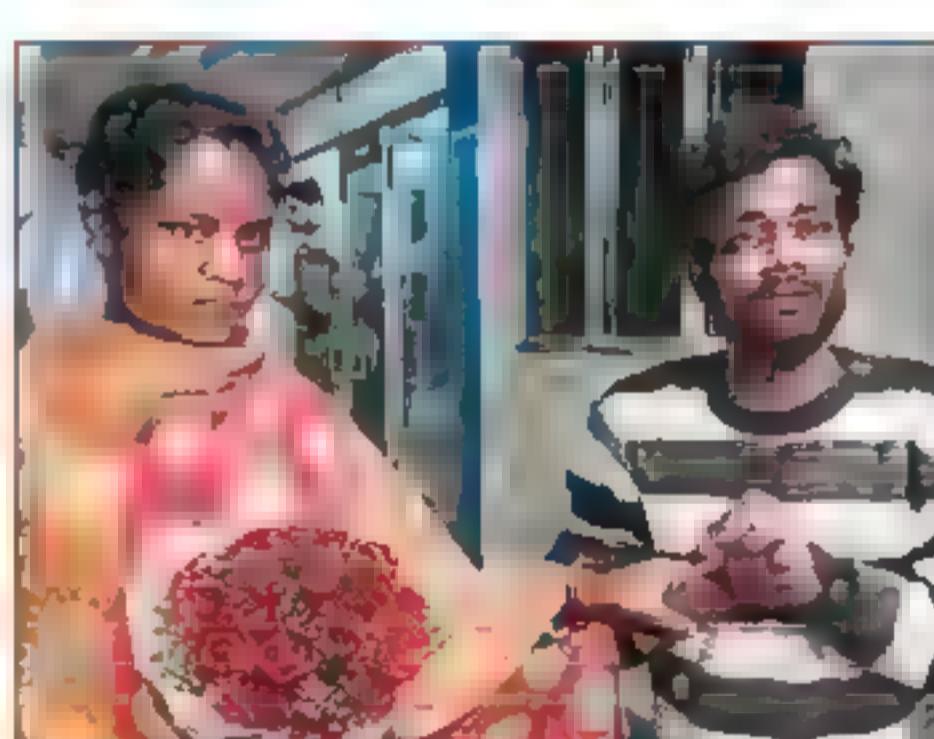
Income and inequality in human development among the states is a major concern in India. In 1970-71, the *per capita* income of the poorest state, Bihar, was about 63% of the national average. After five decades, in 2020-21, Bihar remained the poorest state but its *per capita* income had fallen further to just about 33% of India's *per capita* income. In the same year, Goa had a *per capita* income that was higher than the Indian average by 62%. In 2020-21, Goa's *per capita* was more than three times the national average. In 1970-71, aside from Delhi, the richest states' *per capita* incomes were roughly 2.5 times of those of the poorest states; now it is 10 times of those of the poorest states. Clearly, inter-state income inequality has increased substantially.

The Common School System Commission constituted by the Bihar government to explore the possibility of providing free and compulsory school education to all children gave its report in 2007 but it could not be implemented as that would have meant that about half the state budget would have to be spent only on education. No wonder most schools in Bihar do not conform to the standards mandated by the Right to Education Act. Quality education is essential for the economic development of a state. But Bihar has found it difficult to ensure good education for all. The situation of the state's healthcare infrastructure is similar.

It is becoming more difficult to make resources available to poorer states. India needs to reimagine the mechanism of fiscal transfer. One way out could be the Union government taking the financial responsibility for providing education and healthcare to all states even though the responsibility for implementing the same would lie with the states. There is also good reason for providing financial assistance to states for maintaining law and order without taking away their powers. India has been pursuing a policy of priority sector lending. Banks and financial institutions can thus be mandated to advance a minimum percentage of deposits collected from the states. Another equalising mechanism can be the prioritising of infrastructure like highways and railways in the backward states.

Financial devolution might have become a controversial issue unless the Centre takes up more financial responsibilities.

Nitya Nanda is Director, Council for Social Development, New Delhi



Love's labour lost

■ Sir — Glow boards proclaiming love for a city or a ward do precious little for a neighbourhood. Perhaps this is why Bapan Badaykar from Shur, West Bengal, thought it would be alright to steal the illuminated heart from the street installation to declare his love for his wife. When his theft was discovered, Badaykar was given a bouquet of roses by the authorities to give to his wife instead. However, one hopes that now that Badaykar has removed part of the unnecessary glow sign, light will finally dawn on municipal authorities about the uselessness of these decorations. After all, while garish glow signs are eyesores in cities, vast stretches of roads in the suburbs remain dark and dangerous without even street lamps to illuminate them.

Amresh Maiti,
Birbhum

■ Sir — As it celebrates its birth centenary this year, the time has come for the RSS to introspect and adapt itself to the changing social views. It needs to recognise the diversity of India and preach communal harmony. Mohan Bhagwat has recently advised people to stop looking for *mandirs* in mosque complexes. This is a welcome move and might imbue a new kind of ideology amongst the Hindutva brigade.

Gurnoor Grewal,
Chandigarh

Poor remark

■ Sir — Recently the mayor of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Trinamool Congress leader, Firhad Hakim, allegedly remarked that with the grace of god.

Muslims could become the majority in India. This is a blow against India's secular ethos. The TMC should be cautious of what its leaders say in public.

K.V. Seetharamaiah,
Bangalore

■ Sir — Firhad Hakim seems unfazed by the backlash caused by his statement in spite of his party censuring him. Has the ruling party in Bengal become so dependent on individual leaders that they are automatically absolved of sins? Strict action should be taken against Hakim.

Tusar Kanti Kar,
Howrah

■ Sir — It is hypocritical of Bharatiya Janata Party leaders to point fingers at Firhad Hakim when almost all of them have engaged in divisive rhetoric in the past ("Trinamool condemns Hakim's remarks", Dec 17). From labelling Muslims as "jinke zyada bacche hain" to shouting slogans like "Go back to Pakistan" the ruling party has left no



Off the mark

wear foot wear until the DMK government was ousted from power. This is childish. After his earlier gimmicks failed to garner votes for the saffron party, Annamalai has now stooped even lower.

Tharcus S. Fernando,
Chennai

■ Sir — The BJP has been quick to blame the DMK government regarding incidents of rape and murder in the state. But the BJP cannot accuse the DMK of gross inaction when its lack of sympathy for the women of Manipur and its refusal

to take steps to mitigate the situation there have stoked ethnic fires in the state. K. Annamalai's vow to not wear foot wear until the DMK is no longer in power in Tamil Nadu is just a gimmick to stay in the political limelight. Gimmick anew

Letters should be sent to:
The Telegraph
6 Prafulla Sarkar Street,
Calcutta 700001
edit@abp.in

Mind the gap

NITYA NANDA

Given this situation, it is important to understand why the poorer states have not been able to catch up despite getting favourable treatment in the devolution of funds from the common tax pool. A state with low income has a lower capability when it comes to raising its own revenue as people spend a larger share of their income on food and other necessities — segments in which there is minimal scope for imposing taxes. Most states — Bihar is one example — pay salaries to their employees at rates that are higher than the market rate and are often beyond their capability. The Common School System Commission constituted by the Bihar government to explore the possibility of providing free and compulsory school education to all children gave its report in 2007 but it could not be implemented as that would have meant that about half the state budget would have to be spent only on education. No wonder most schools in Bihar do not conform to the standards mandated by the Right to Education Act. Quality education is essential for the economic development of a state. But Bihar has found it difficult to ensure good education for all. The situation of the state's healthcare infrastructure is similar.

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Kajal Chatterjee,
Calcutta

New low

■ Sir — A student was raped within the premises of Anna University in Chennai. The assailant was allegedly affiliated with the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. Taking *suo motu* cognisance of the matter, the Madras High Court admonished the Chennai police commissioner, A. Arun, for his handling of the case and raised questions about his conduct during the investigation. The court formed an all-woman special investigation team to probe the assault and the subsequent leak of the first information report, which exposed the survivor's details. A rise in incidents of crime against women in Tamil Nadu might spell doom for the ruling party.

Gopalaswamy J.,
Chennai

■ Sir — The Tamil Nadu Bharatiya Janata Party president, K. Annamalai, flogged himself to protest against the sexual assault on a student at Anna University and declared that he would not

**THE TIP**

Boil milk before drinking.
Raw milk may contain
harmful germs that can
cause diarrhoea

The Telegraph

WELLNESS

CALCUTTA WEDNESDAY 1 JANUARY 2025

Bar and benchmark

High-intensity drinking is more dangerous than bingeing, says Christina Caron

The holidays offer an excuse to gather with loved ones, let loose and indulge in plates loaded with comfort foods. Unapologetic napping. All the pie. And, for a lot of people, plenty of alcohol.

But heavy drinking is not limited to the holiday season. Nor is it mainly the pastime of college students.

Overall binge drinking rates are now equivalent among young adults and those in midlife. That's because young people, especially young men, are binging less — while middle-aged adults are throwing back more alcohol in a single session than they previously did.

We've long been warned about the risks of binge drinking, usually defined as having four or five drinks in a two-hour span. And now researchers are increasingly focused on a more dangerous pattern of alcohol use that they call high-intensity drinking: consuming eight or more drinks in a row for women and 10 or more drinks in a row for men.

High-intensity drinking is even riskier than binge drinking, and it's on the rise among certain segments of the population.

High-intensity vs binge drinking

The definition of binge drinking stems from the work of Henry Wechsler, a social psychologist at Harvard University, US, who in 1993 tracked alcohol use among college students across the country. He found that young women who reported consuming at least four drinks in a night and men who consumed at least five experienced the most drinking-related problems.

But other researchers noticed that some of the worst consequences associated with binge drinking, such as blackouts and alcohol poisoning, tended to happen when people had much more than four or five drinks.

Over the years, experts have referred to heavier levels of binge drinking in many different ways, including "extreme drinking" and the far less catchy "extreme ritualistic alcohol consumption".



In recent years they settled on "high-intensity drinking".

Who consumes eight or 10 drinks in a row?

Heavy drinking has long been associated with youth but trends are changing.

Since 2005, the Monitoring the Future survey, which tracks the behaviour of American adolescents through adulthood, has asked people aged 19 to 30 how often they have engaged in high-intensity drinking over the previous two weeks.

The survey found that high-intensity drinking decreased to 8.5 per cent of study subjects in 2023, from about 11 per cent in 2013.

But "while the prevalence is coming down, it is still high", particularly for those in their late 20s, said George F. Koob, the director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Nearly one in eight people aged 27 and 28 regularly consumes 10 or more drinks in a night, according

to the latest data from 2023.

The National Alcohol Survey series, which collects data from the general population, defines high-intensity drinking as the consumption of at least eight drinks in a row by anyone, male or female, over the previous 12 months.

The survey's latest analysis, which does not include data beyond the year 2020, also showed a decline in high-intensity drinking among young adults overall. But its frequency among men aged 30 and older and women aged 18 to 64 has increased, said Camilla Lui, a scientist at the Alcohol Research Group who crunched the data.

Problems associated with high-intensity drinking

Experts who study the effects of alcohol said it was worth distinguishing between bingeing and high-intensity drinking because the latter comes with heavier consequences.

Consuming eight or 10 drinks

in a short period of time can produce a blood alcohol concentration or BAC of over 0.2 per cent, "which significantly increases the risk of injuries, overdose and deaths", Koob said.

For comparison, a regular binge (four or five drinks) typically results in a BAC of around 0.08 per cent.

High-intensity drinkers are also more likely to experience a "full blackout", with zero recall of what transpired, or to end up in the emergency room, "grossly intoxicated and a danger to themselves and others", said Keith Humphreys, an addiction expert and psychologist at Stanford University, US. When people drink that much, "the risk of harm goes up pretty dramatically", he added.

In addition, a higher number of drinks per occasion is associated with a greater likelihood of developing alcohol use disorder, Koob said.

And "high-intensity drinking doesn't just harm the drinker", Lui said. It can lead to physical assaults, drunken-driving acci-

dents, property damage and relapse problems, she added.

There are many reasons someone might abuse alcohol, from a genetic disposition to self-medicating.

But when it comes to high-intensity drinking, studies have found that young people were largely motivated by the expectation that it would make them more social and help them have fun with friends. And that, for them, outweighed any potential negative consequences.

The National Alcohol Survey has shown that middle-aged and older adults drink during social events, too, but they also reported using drinking as a way to deal with stress, Lui said.

More research is needed to fully unpack why some age groups are gravitating toward this more extreme form of bingeing. Because while five drinks is risky, it's not the same as 10, Humphreys said.

"The dose makes the poison," he added.

NYTNS



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NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
E-tender invited from experienced and financially sound contractor/agency for the following work.

Sl. No.	Name of Work NIT-E/Tender/2024-25/14	Estimated cost (In Rs.)	Earliest Money (In Rs.)	Time of completion	Cost of tender documents (In Rs.)	Last date for online submission of Tender
1.	Supplying and installation of street light at the road between type V (new) and new type V quarter upto the entrance of married scholar hostel at NIT Silchar	6,58,223/-	1332/-	60 Days	1000/-	10/1/2025 up to 2.00 P.M
2.	Providing Electrical power points for AC's installed at F.C.P. department at NIT Silchar	10,29,604/-	20592/-	60 Days	1000/-	
3.	Electrical related works to provide main power supply at grade IV quarter of NIT Silchar	6,64,569/-	1337/-	60 Days	1000/-	
4.	Replacement of underground electrical cables installed at K.V NIT Silchar	6,95,408/-	13902/-	60 Days	1000/-	
5.	Street light repairing work at K.V school at NIT Silchar	8,35,113/-	16702/-	60 Days	1000/-	

The detailed tender notice may be seen at Institute website http://www.nits.ac.in, http://www.tenders.gov.in & Institute notice board. The tender documents will be available at CPP portal from 03/01/2025
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Who Should Choose Bariatric Surgery?

Dr. Sarfaraz Balig, MS, FRCS, FMBS, FIAGES, FALS, Consultant Gastro Surgeon, Specialist in Bariatric, Hernia, Hiatal, and Colorectal Surgery



For many of us weight loss is desirable for looking good. Some, weight loss is mandatory for surviving or getting rid of diseases.

Patients who are severely obese (BMI > 40 OR weight > 120 kgs in general) typically fall in this category.

Many of them have uncontrolled diabetes where injections and pills are unable to maintain normal blood sugar. They may also have failing organs such as kidney and liver and can require dialysis and cardiac stents.

Many have a disease called sleep apnea that leads to poor sleep, lethargy and

breathlessness that may require a CPAP machine at night. These patients develop heart failure and have sudden death.

Many complain of painful knees and back leading them to have poor mobility and quality of life. Some may need knee replacement.

Finally, many have poor self-esteem and confidence leading to poor prospect in jobs and relationships.

These categories of patients stand to benefit maximally from bariatric surgery which is a laparoscopic surgery that involves 4-5 tiny holes and one day of hospital stay. Patients would lose 30% of their weight over a year. Not only that, diseases such as diabetes, sleep apnea, arthritis

and psychological issues get corrected dramatically. Medicinal treatment in the form of dieting, exercises and drugs rarely give this excellent outcome.

Surprisingly therefore, recent global guidelines strongly recommend bariatric surgery for patients with severe obesity especially with diabetes, sleep apnea, and arthritis.

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Address: 7B, Short Street, Kolkata - 700017
Mailinfo@digestivesurgeryclinic.com

TT Connect Initiative

Alcohol-Induced Chronic Pancreatitis: Elucidating Risks and Consequences

Chronic pancreatitis is a debilitating condition characterized by persistent inflammation of the pancreas, leading to irreversible scarring and damage, it may cause severe health complications, says Dr. Debasis Datta, Director of Gastroenterology, Fortis Hospital.

Other symptoms include:

- Vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Fatty stool
- Glucose intolerance
- Chronic diarrhoea
- Back pain

Alcohol consumption significantly increases the risk of developing chronic pancreatitis, with smoking exacerbating this risk. A family history of the same condition may also predispose individuals to chronic pancreatitis.

The main symptom of chronic pancreatitis is abdominal pain.

The pain can be sudden and severe or you may experience more mild episodes of pain. For some patients, the pain is constant.

Diagnostic tests for chronic pancreatitis may include:

- Abdominal X-rays
- Ultrasounds
- CT scans
- MRI scans
- Endoscopic ultrasound (EUS)

Treatment for chronic pancreatitis focuses on managing pain and improving digestive function. While pancreatic damage cannot be reversed, proper care can alleviate symptoms. Treatment options may include medication, endoscopic therapies, or surgery. Endoscopic treatment is often performed to extract stones and insert stent to relieve pain. It is essential for individuals diagnosed with chronic pancreatitis to avoid alcohol consumption and smoking, as these habits can increase the risk of pancreatic cancer. You may need to limit the amount of fat in your diet and take vitamins.

Help line: 8585030388



DJOKOVIC
ENDS 2024
WITH
A WIN
P15

KICK OFF WITH The Telegraph

SPORT

EMBARRASSING TO LOSE SUCH A LOT OF GAMES: AMORIM **P16**

CALCUTTA WEDNESDAY 1 JANUARY 2025

XXCE

IN BRIEF

Deepti enters top 5

■ DUBAI: India off-spinner Deepti Sharma climbed a place to be at fifth spot in the latest ICC women's ODI ranking for bowlers following her match-winning performances in the recent series against the West Indies at home. **PTI**

Southgate honour

■ LONDON: Former England football manager Gareth Southgate and Paris Olympics 800m gold medallist Keely Hodgkinson were among those named in King Charles's New Year honours list published on Monday. Southgate receives a knighthood while Hodgkinson gets the Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE). **Reuters**

IOA recognition

■ NEW DELHI: The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has given recognition to the Indian Golf Union led by Harish Kumar Reddy while declaring the other body, headed by Brijinder Singh, void. **PTI**

Rooney fired

■ LONDON: Wayne Rooney was fired as Plymouth Argyle coach on Tuesday after just seven months in charge of the struggling Championship team. The 39-year-old former England and Manchester United striker was hired in May and departs with Plymouth last in the English second tier with four wins in 23 games this season. **AP/PTI**

Ko a Dame

■ WELLINGTON: Lydia Ko has been made a Dame in the New Year's honours list in New Zealand for her services to golf. Ko is the youngest New Zealander at age 27 to receive the honour. **AP/PTI**

Schools' cricket

■ CALCUTTA: Don Bosco School Liluah and Assembly Of God Church School won their respective matches in the SLOBA Inter-school Invitational T20 cricket tournament on Monday. In Category A (U-13) Don Bosco Liluah defeated DPS Joka by 10 wickets while in Category B (U-15) Assembly Of God Church beat St. Lawrence High School by 4 wickets. **Our Bureau**

THIS DAY THAT YEAR

1967: The second day's play of the India-West Indies Test at Eden Gardens is cancelled as spectators clash with police and set fire to the stands leading to an infamous riot.

2014: New Zealand's Corey Anderson hits the then fastest ODI century, off just 36 balls in a shortened game against the West Indies in Queenstown, breaking Shahid Afridi's 37-ball ton scored in 1996. Anderson goes on to score an unbeaten 131 off 47 balls and New Zealand win the match by 159 runs.

2017: Vidarbha, coached by Chandrakanth Pandit, win their maiden Ranji Trophy title, defeating Delhi by nine wickets in Indore.

TEST TEAM OF THE YEAR

Jasprit Bumrah has been chosen to lead Cricket Australia's 'standout XI' for the year 2024 and includes only two Australians. Six countries have been represented in the team with Yashasvi Jaiswal being the only other Indian to feature in the side. Australia captain Pat Cummins doesn't find a place in the 'team', which has Josh Hazlewood and Matt Henry as the other two fast bowlers. Bumrah has claimed 71 wickets in 13 Tests during the calendar year, the best haul since Dale Steyn's 74 wickets in 2008. The fast bowler has already 'torched' Australia with 30 wickets in four Tests on the current tour. This is the team:

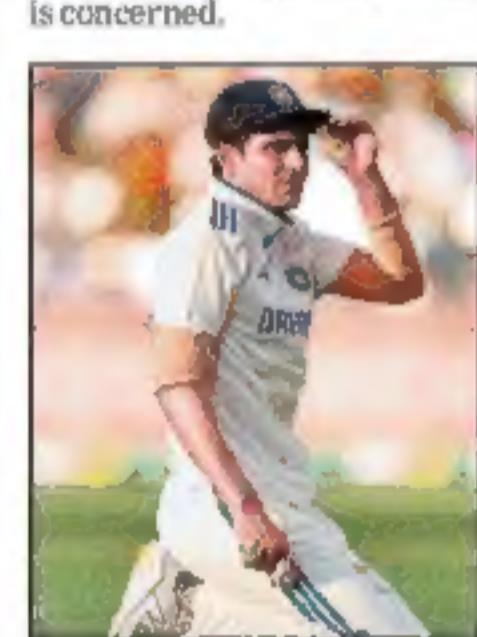


Gill riddle for Team India in final game

SAYAK BANERJEE

Calcutta: The "Prince of Indian cricket", as Shubman Gill is often referred to, seems to be finding himself in a strange situation in the Indian cricket kingdom at present.

It's not often that an established batsman gets dropped from the XI for a Test and that too, on a tour of Australia. But in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy, continuity in the final XI has been the last thing as far as the Indian team management is concerned.



Shubman Gill during the second Test at the Adelaide Oval. (Getty Images)

Gill's numbers so far in the series aren't too inspiring, though, as he tallies just 60 runs in three innings. Besides, dropping Washington again to accommodate the No.3 batter won't be fair on the all-rounder. Had he not stitched together a 127-run eighth-wicket stand with Nitish Kumar Reddy, the margin of defeat could have been more embarrassing for India in Melbourne.

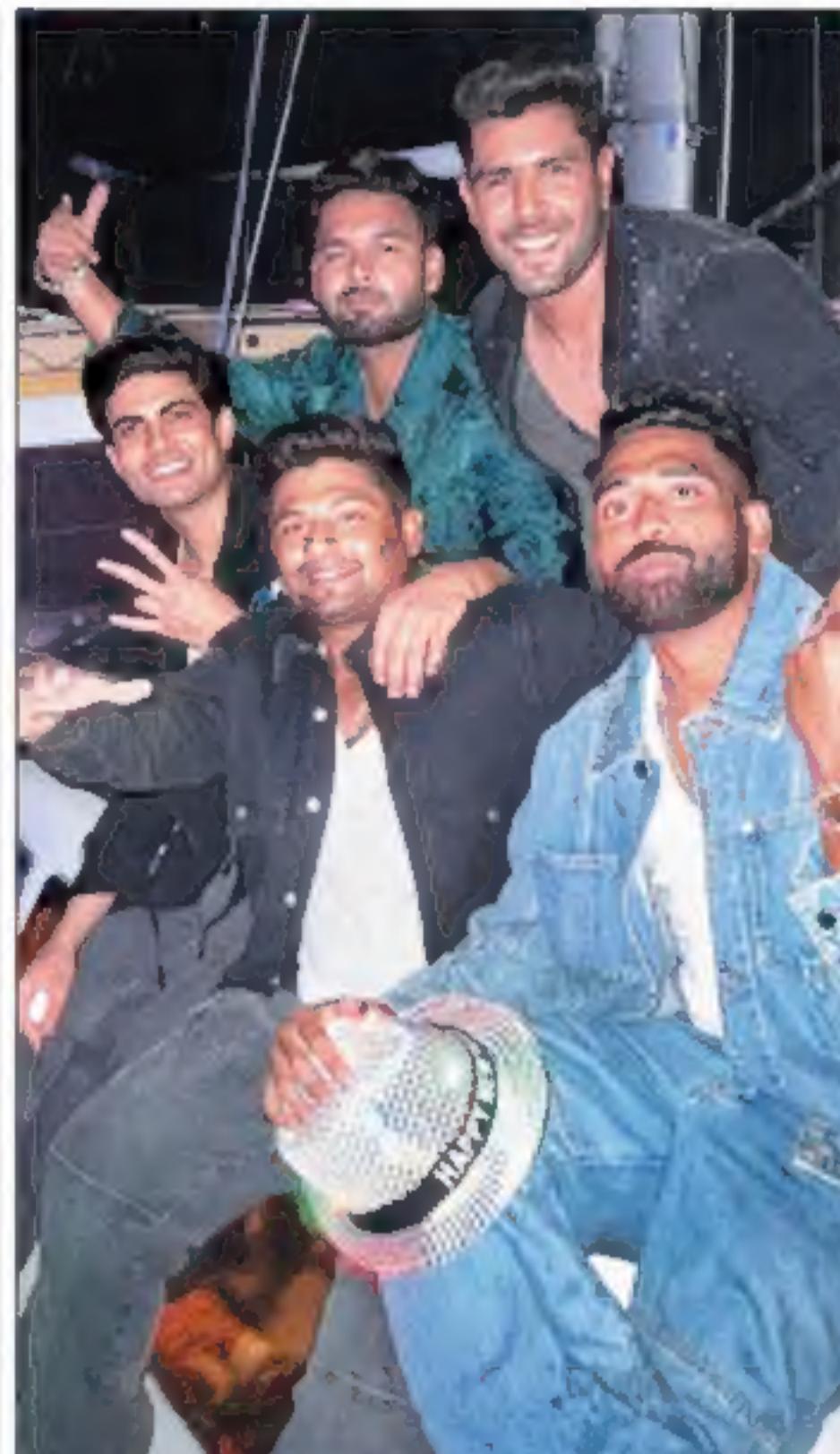
However, with Rohit and Virat Kohli struggling for runs, adding a specialist batsman in the top four may give a little bit of cushion to the batting group. But then, who will Gill replace?

"Benching (pace) Akash Deep and bringing Gill in his place is definitely one option," a BCCI official told The Telegraph on Tuesday.

"Yes, by doing so, the team will be one specialist bowler short. But then, when you have two quicks (Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj) and as many spinners (Rachin Ravindra, Jadeja and Washington) along with a seamer all-rounder (Reddy), it's quite fair if you look to strengthen your batting."

Having said that, India's sticking to the MCG XI for the final Test cannot be ruled out either. The conditions in Sydney will certainly have a bearing on the combination they decide to go with. More so, if the SCG surface looks a tad greener than usual.

One may find the skipper's view on the matter justified. But more than bowling, it's batting that has troubled India



Team India players celebrating New Year in Sydney on Tuesday, in a picture posted on X

Head's 'finger on the ice' moment

Melbourne: Australia batsman Travis Head has explained his unusual celebration after dismissing Rishabh Pant in the Boxing Day Test, stating it signifies "finger on the ice", a quirky gesture that he first showed during the tour of Sri Lanka.

After batting through an entire session, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Rishabh Pant appeared poised to guide India to a draw on the final day of the Boxing Day Test on Monday.

However, Head turned the game on its head by dismissing Pant, which triggered a dramatic Indian collapse and paved the way for a 184-run Australian victory, giving the hosts a 2-1 lead in the five-match series.

Pant mistimed a pull shot and was caught at long-on,

after which Head celebrated the moment with his distinctive gesture of folding the fingers of his left hand into a circle and dipping the forefinger of his right hand into it.

"Finger on the ice. I started in Sri Lanka. I put my finger on the ice and be ready to go for the next one," Head told "Triple M Radio" after the Melbourne Test.

"I didn't expect to be bowling. I thought Galle would be my next bowling. I'll go put it down in a little cup of ice, be ready to go up there next," he added.

Head's celebration quickly gained attention and went viral on social media. After the match, Australian captain Pat Cummins was asked about it and he offered a light-hearted explanation.

Travis Head's "finger on the ice" celebration (right) after dismissing Rishabh Pant on the final day of the Melbourne Test on Monday has drawn varied reactions. "I put my finger on the ice and be ready to go for the next one,"

Head, however, said after the Test. (AP)

"I can explain it. It's his finger so hot he's got to put it in a cup of ice. Yeah, that's what it is," Cummins told reporters.

"So that's normally the running joke. It was in the Gabba or somewhere he got a

wicket as well and just straight to the fridge, grabs a bucket of ice, puts his finger in and just walks in front of Lyon (Nathan Lyon). Just like that (he) thinks it's very funny."

"So that's what it would

have been, nothing else." However, Head's celebration didn't sit well with former India cricketer Navjot Singh Sidhu, who demanded "stringent action" against the Australian player, calling it "obnoxious".

Travis Head's obnoxious behaviour during the course of the Melbourne test doesn't auger well for the gentleman's game...sets the worst possible example when there are kids, women, young & old watching the game.

"...this caustic conduct did not insult an individual but a nation of 1.5 billion Indians... stringent punishment that would serve a deterrent for the future generations needs to be slapped on him so that no one dares follow suit!!!" Sidhu posted on X.

PTI

Forget PR, play good cricket: MS



Mahendra Singh Dhoni in Ranchi earlier this year. (PTI)

son of the IPL and he admitted it's not easy to maintain peak fitness.

"I am not fit as I used to be, lot of efforts now needs to be there on what you are eating and I am doing very specific things to be fit for cricket. We are not fast bowlers so our requirements are not that intense."

"What really helps me is playing a lot of sports in between eating and going to the gym. So whenever I get time I like to play a lot of different sports, maybe tennis, badminton, football, that keeps me engaged. That's the best way of being in touch with fitness," he said.

Dhoni, one of India's most successful captains, never missed international cricket and felt he has been able to do his bit to make his country proud. He led India in 60 Test

matches, winning 27, losing 18 with 15 ending in draws.

"I thought I will get more time, but sadly, I haven't got much time. I didn't miss international cricket because I always believe you know you think about everything then you take a decision."

"Once you have taken a decision no point really thinking about that. So I am very happy with God's grace whatever I was able to do for my country."

The wicketkeeper-batter added: "Other than that it has been fun. I have been able to spend a lot of time with friends, I can do a lot more motorcycle rides, not the long ones, that's something very close to my heart."

"It has been good, family time, daughter questioning when you are coming back."

Written with PTI input

Pradipta & Sayan show helps Bengal top group

OUR BUREAU

Calcutta: Pradipta Pramanik's all-round show and Sayan Ghosh's finer were key to Bengal's 24-run victory over Kerala in their Vijay Hazare Trophy clash at the NEXGEN Cricket ground in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

VIJAY HAZARE

Left-arm spinner Pramanik's unbeaten 74 off 82 balls and 1/35 of his 10 overs, along with medium-pacer Ghosh's 5/33, were massive in Bengal defending a modest 207-run target. With this win, Bengal went on top of Group E with 14 points from four matches.

Pramanik took the crease when Bengal were reeling at 91/6 in the 26th over after



Mumbai's Ayush Mhatre, in a picture shared on Instagram.

being put in. The 26-year-old Pramanik remained calm and with No.11 Ghosh doing his best to not give his wicket away, the pair stitched an unbroken 35 to push Bengal to 206/9 in the allotted 50 overs.

"No matter what the situation was, I had to remain positive and look to score because that's how the approach should be in limited-overs

cricket," Pramanik said later.

Mumbai player record

Elsewhere in Ahmedabad, Mumbai's Ayush Mhatre set a world record for the youngest player to score 150-plus in List A cricket during their Vijay Hazare Trophy game against Nagaland, bettering statemate Yashasvi Jaiswal's effort.

He clobbered 11 sixes and 15 fours to hit 181, powering his side to 403/7 in 50 overs.

At 17 years and 188 days, Mhatre broke the previous record set by Jaiswal, who was 17 years and 291 days when he did so against Jharkhand in 2019.

Brief scores: Bengal 206/9 in 50 ovs (Pramanik 74 n.o.; MD Nidheesh 3/46). Kerala 182 in 46.5 ovs (Sayan Ghosh 53*; Mukesh Kumar 2/27). Bengal won by 24 runs.

On the roster in the new year

SAYAK BANERJEE,
ANGSHUMAN ROY &
ELORA SEN

As the new year dawns with its hopes, dreams, and expectations, The Telegraph takes a look at some of the major sporting events.

Mini-World Cup

The venue-related uncertainty finally over, India's ICC Champions Trophy campaign will be in Dubai and there should be some relief over not having to travel to Pakistan. The conditions in Dubai aren't all unfamiliar to the Indian cricketers, while decent crowd support too should be egging them on to bring out their A-game, especially during critical situations. India begin their campaign in this 50-overs-a-side contest on February 20 against Bangladesh.



Ben Stokes

Obviously, their clash against arch-rivals Pakistan on February 23 will be India's most-awaited one in the competition, though the former haven't quite been able to match up with India's on-field abilities in recent times. On paper, India are a good mile or two ahead of Pakistan. In fact, their toughest game could be that against New Zealand on March 2, with the Black Caps being the more disciplined and consistent side than both Pakistan and Bangladesh. Besides, in ICC events, New Zealand tend to lift their game to another level, making sure to reach the last-four stage at least.

From Group A, India and New Zealand seem to be the favourites to make the semi-finals. However, it remains to be seen, though, as to how many among the current crop of senior players continue till the Champions Trophy as the remainder of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia still have a fair bit to reveal. The team selected for the upcoming home limited-overs matches against England will also be an indication.

Among the other teams in the Champions Trophy, Group B appears to be the 'group of death' featuring Australia, England, South Af-

rica and Afghanistan. Count the Afghans out at your own peril, especially after their upset wins over England and Pakistan in the 2023 ODI World Cup, which was followed by a semi-final finish in the 2024 T20 World Cup.

Best in Test

The World Test Championship final, slated from June 11-15 at Lord's, will be witnessing South Africa as one of the contestants. But who will be joining the Proteas at Lord's?



Pat Cummins

Australia are certainly the firm favourites to do so, considering their 2-1 lead over India in the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy Down Under. India aren't out of contention yet, as they must win the fifth and final Test in Sydney to keep their prospects of making the final alive.

But then, India have to hope Australia draw both their Tests in Sri Lanka or lose the series.

However, all eyes will be on the

South Africans as they get yet another chance to win a world event after coming perilously close to winning the 2024 T20 World Cup final against India, only to mess up in the last four overs of the game. What could give South Africa an edge in this WTC final is their pace bowling unit, which is tenacious and can rip through a batting order if conditions are player-friendly.

The only thing South Africa need to look after is their batting department, which still wears a vulnerable look.

English summer

For the first time since the 2002 series, James Anderson, who retired in May 2024, will not be on the field in any of the India-England Tests when both teams face off in a five-match series from June to August. The highest wicket-taker among quicks in Tests, though, could still play a part during those Tests against India if he decides to continue as England's bowling mentor.

For India, this series, which will also be their first official 2025-27 World Test Championship cycle, could well mark the beginning of a new journey in Test cricket depending on how things transpire in the upcoming final Test against Australia in Sydney. Nonetheless, whether India play the series under a new captain or not, the focus will certainly be on

how well Yashasvi Jaiswal adjusts in what would be his first tour of England. The left-hander hasn't done badly in his maiden Australia tour with a century and a couple of fifties so far.

For England, despite the conditions, it will be interesting to see how the young quicks like Gus Aikinson, Brydon Carse and Matthew Potts - with Mark Wood likely to spearhead the attack - fare against an Indian line-up consisting of several stroke-makers. England are also confident of Jofra Archer playing in a Test or two against India.

However, they would seriously pray for the return of captain Ben Stokes by then. Stokes, following the New Zealand tour, is down with a recurring hamstring issue which requires surgery as well.

Bazball Down Under

The last time England had won an Ashes series was back in 2015 at home. Will they be able to regain the urn when the clash resumes from November 21 in Perth? Or, will the Australians retain it once again?

Even though the Australians couldn't beat England in England, they still managed to draw the series in 2018 and 2023. At home, England have been their easy prey in recent times.

That said, one is eager to find out the bowling attack Australia go with in the 2025 Ashes. Will captain Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood form the pace trio with Nathan Lyon being the lone spinner, or will there be any tweak? These bowlers aren't getting any younger, though.

For the England pacers, the task won't be too easy in Australian conditions as

they rely a fair amount on swing. In that case, Wood and Archer will have a huge role to play and so does promising young off-spinner Shaheen Shahid, if selected.

How well Bazball fares in Australia is another interesting prospect. Openers Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett, for sure, will try to go after the Australian bowlers, but the key for England will be the form of Joe Root and Harry Brook.

Fifa Club World Cup

The 2025 Fifa Club World

Cup will be played in the US

from June 14 to July 13. It

will be the first under an ex-

panded format with 32 teams,

including the winners of the

four previous continental

championships. Lionel Mes-

sí's Inter Miami are one of

the participating teams. A

total of 12 venues will be used

to host the 63 matches which

will be played across the United

States, with the final to be

played at MetLife Stadium in

New York New Jersey and

the opening match at Miami's

Hard Rock Stadium. Teams

like Real Madrid, Manchester

United, Bayern Munich,

Chelsea and Neymar's Al

Hilal will be seen in action.

Focus on Neeraj

The World Athletics Champi-

onship will be held in Tokyo

from September 13 to 21.

Neeraj Chopra will defend

his title and is expected to

face stiff competition from

Paris Olympic gold medalist

Arshad Nadeem and bronze

medalist Anderson Peters.

Neeraj has roped in Jan

Zelezny of the Czech Republic,

a three-time Olympic gold

medalist and the current

world record holder as his

new coach after his long-term

German guide Klaus Bartoň

took retirement. "It

was an injury-plagued year

but the injury is fine now, I

will be 100 per cent fit for the

new season,"

Neeraj said recently. "Technical issues are

also there but we will work on them. I will look to improve my technique." The World

Athletics Championship will be Neeraj's first major test

after his silver medal-winning

feat at the Paris Olympic

Games.

Chess test

The Women's Chess World

Cup will be held in Batumi, Georgia from July 5 to 29. Fide, the game's world governing body, is yet to announce the dates and venue for the open World Cup. Magnus Carlsen is the defending champion and India's Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa finished runner-up. India will host the fifth leg of the women's grand prix series from April 13 to 24.

Inter Miami's Lionel Messi

Hoping for an impact

The 29th edition of the World Championships will be held in Paris from August 25 to 31.

India, whose best moment

in badminton in 2024 was

the triumph of the women's

team at the Badminton Asia

Team Championship, will

be looking to make some

impact at the Paris tourna-

ment. The team of

Amol Kharb, Treesa Jolly, Gayatri Gopichand and the talan-

amic PV Sindhu won

India's maiden continental

team title in February. But

the rest of the year hardly

saw any major success, with

the Paris Olympics being spe-

cially disappointing. So the

likes of Laksya Sen, Sindhu

and Pranoy and doubles

pairs of Treesa Jolly-Gayatri

Gopichand and Satwik-

sairaj Rankireddy-Chirag

Shetty will definitely want

to put up a worthy perfor-

mance at the world meet in Paris. However, apart from Shetty-Rankireddy (who are at present ranked 9th), no other Indian features among the top 10.

New League

The year after the Olympic Games is generally seen as a lean phase in shooting. The next Olympic cycle will begin in the latter part of 2026. The talk in the shooting world is the new Shooting League of India conceptualised by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) in the style of IPL. The league has received the nod from the International Shooting Sport Federation. This will add to the glut of franchise-based leagues in other disciplines that have sprouted in the country following IPL's roaring success. The auction is slated for March and the league is likely to be held in June. Superstar Manu Bhaker will be the main attraction. NRAI will also host the Junior World Cup in September.

- Feb 19-March 9: Champions Trophy cricket (in Pakistan & Dubai)
- June 11-15: World Test Championship final (Lord's)
- June 14-July 13: Fifa Club World Cup in the US
- June 20-Aug 4: India's cricket tour of England
- July 5-29: Fifa Women's World Cup chess in Batumi (Georgia)
- Aug 15-Sept 15: Women's World Cup cricket in India
- Aug 25-31: World Badminton Championships in Paris (France)
- Sept 5-12: World Archery Championships (Gwangju, South Korea)
- Sept 13-21: World Athletics in Tokyo (Japan)
- Sept 13-21: World Wrestling in Zagreb (Croatia)
- Sept 21-January 8 (2026): The Ashes (in Australia)

R.



R. Vaishali, in a picture posted on X

Vaishali advances, Humpy exits

New York: India grandmaster R Vaishali surprised herself with a stellar performance to enter the quarter-finals of the World Blitz Championship here, even as recently-crowned rapid champion Koneru Humpy made an early exit.

Following Humpy's win in Rapid, which earned her the gold medal and a prize of \$60,000, it was Vaishali's turn to impress her fans. She triumphed in the women's section, scoring 9.5 points out of a possible 11 with three draws.

"I'm very happy with my performance. Honestly, it (performance) was completely unexpected," she said. Vaishali will next face Chinese GM Zhu Jiner.

Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi won the qualifier with 9.5 points, benefiting from the best tiebreak, while Fabiano Caruana of the US finished second, ahead of Carlsen, who was placed third.

Surprisingly, none of the Indians made the top eight.

Arijit Erigaisi played brilliantly at the start, securing victories in the first five rounds but faded away to finish with a sub-par seven points.

R. Praggnanandhaa was the best-placed Indian, with 8.5 points, but a last-round loss to Russian Daniil Dubov cost him a spot in the quarter-finals.

In the Open section, 10

Sanaya for the Stakes

STAR RACER

Calcutta: There is nothing that sounds louder and sweeter than hoofbeats on the lush green lawns of RCTC on the New Year's Day. And Wednesday is not going to be any exception. Therefore, the expected large crowd will have plenty to cheer about in the afternoon's nine-event race card.

The likes of Global Influences and Sky Forces are already considered 'past the post' but visitors may have to do some research in other races.

However, the purists are focused on the Indian Produce Stakes and the RCTC Gold Vase the star attractions on the bid day.

Trainer Bharath Singh's (G. Vivek-up) is a strong fancy in the Produce Stakes, thanks to her good looks, solid preparations and fashionable bloodlines.

Aahiraj Singh Jodha's Golden Kingdom (Suraj Narredu), on the other hand, commands respect in the Gold Vase on his consistency in the highest class.

Djokovic tamed local favourite Rinky Hijikata 6-3, 6-3 in what was the top seeded Serbian's first tour-level singles match since October.

A day after his doubles victory alongside Kyrgios, Djokovic was precise with his serve and groundstrokes as he outclassed Hijikata to set up a second-round clash with Gael Monfils.

"I always expect myself to

Dismal United lose at home again, Chelsea upset

PREMIER LEAGUE	
MAN UNITED	0
NEWCASTLE	2
IPSWICH	2
CHELSEA	0

Manchester: Alexander Isak scored for the sixth straight Premier League game as Newcastle beat Manchester United 2-0 at Old Trafford to condemn Ruben Amorim's side to its worst home run in the top tier since the 1970s.

Relegation-threatened Ipswich beat Chelsea 2-0 to win at home for the first time this season, and Aston Villa and Brighton drew 2-2.

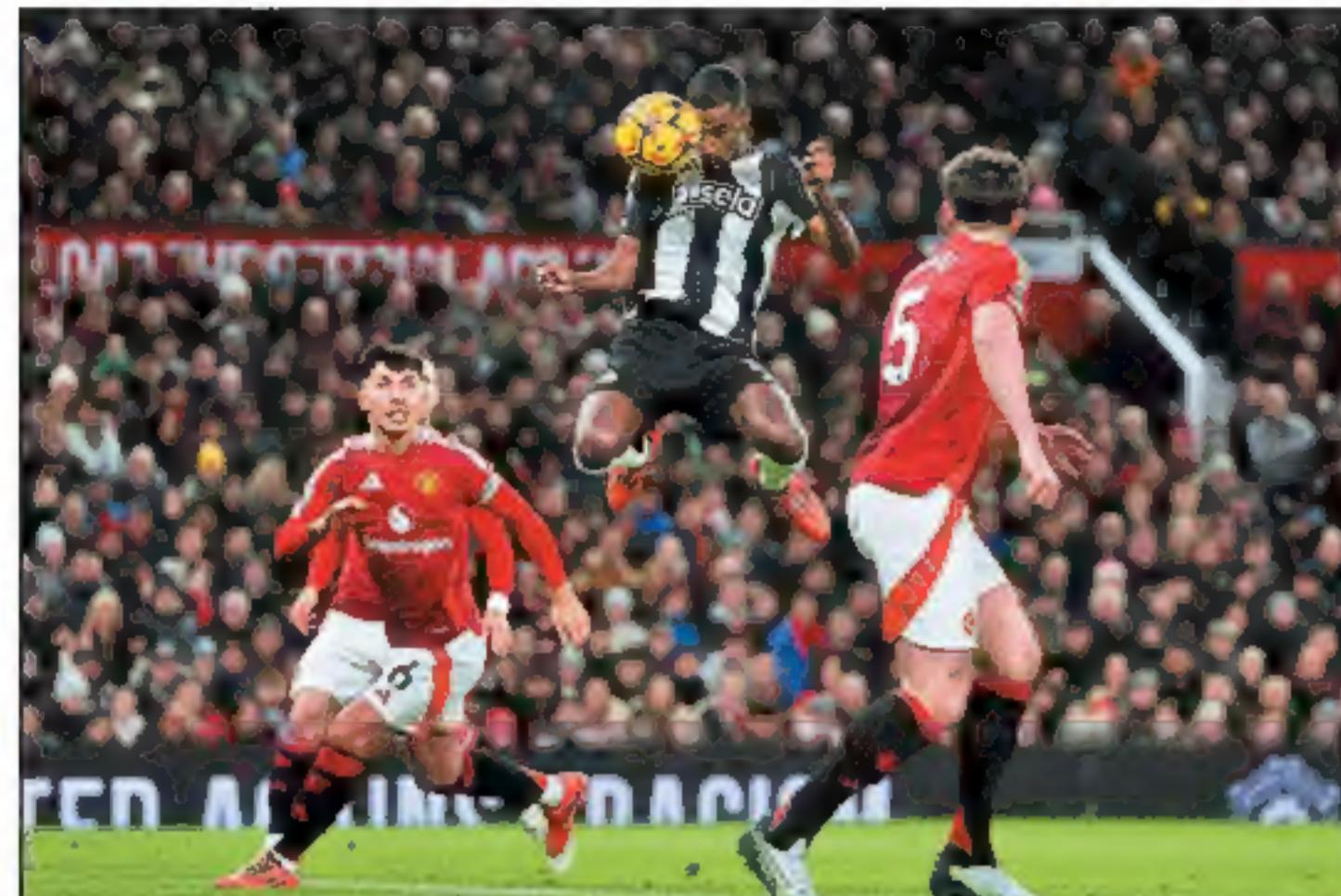
Newcastle's commanding display marked the first time since February 1979 that United have lost three home league games in a row. It was also the first time since 1962 that United have lost five league matches in the same calendar month.

Isak started the misery for home fans with his eighth goal in six matches. The Sweden striker put Newcastle ahead with a header after four minutes and Joelinton doubled the lead 15 minutes later when he rose above Lisandro Martinez to head in a second.

Isak had another effort disallowed after half an hour and Sandro Tonali hit the woodwork seconds later as Newcastle threatened to run riot.

Amorim withdrew Joshua Zirkzee for Kobbie Mainoo before halftime but United looked toothless — and clueless — in what was a dismal display.

"We suffered a goal and



Alexander Isak scores Newcastle United's first goal against Manchester United at Old Trafford on Monday. (Reuters)

then it was hard to come back," Amorim said. "They were the better team, plain and simple."

The defeat was the fifth in eight league games since Amorim joined from Sporting Lisbon in November and left United in 14th place, seven points above the relegation zone.

Newcastle are fifth and starting to entertain the possibility of a top-four finish.

"There is still a long way to go but the team is improving," Joelinton said. "Time will tell how good we are but we are enjoying football right now."

First home win

Chelsea started the day with

the best away record in the league after leaders Liverpool but they were trailing at Portman Road after just 12 minutes, thanks to a mistake from goalkeeper Filip Jorgensen.

The Scandinavian re-

placed Robert Sanchez in the Chelsea goal but he was adjudged to have fouled Liam Delap in the box and Delap got up to convert the penalty with aplomb.

Chelsea pushed forward in search of an equaliser but Ipswich doubled the lead early in the second half.

A poor pass from Axel Dis-

asi allowed Delap to stretch the Chelsea defense and his pass set up Omari Hutchinson to score against his former club.

It was the first time this season that Chelsea have lost two games in a row.

They remain in fourth place after missing a chance to go above Arsenal and Nottingham Forest into second. It was the first home win in the Premier League for promoted Ipswich since 2002 and coach Kieran McKenna praised his side.

"It was everything it needed to be," McKenna said. "We defended, outstanding organization throughout the game." "There has been hope in

the performances in general, we have been competing in almost every game. If you do that, you always have a chance."

Villa held

Aston Villa were unbeaten in their last eight games at Villa Park but went behind after just 12 minutes against a lively Brighton side.

With the Villa defence all at sea, Simon Adingra gathered a loose ball and curled a right-footed shot past Emiliano Martinez.

Villa came roaring back and got an equaliser in the 36th through birthday boy Ollie Watkins. The 25-year-old Watkins, who returned to the side to replace the suspended Jhon Duran, converted a penalty after Morgan Rogers was adjudged to have been fouled.

It was Rogers who put Villa in front early in the second half and once again Watkins was involved. His cute chip released Rogers, who chested the ball down and scored his sixth goal of the season.

However, Tariq Lamptey fired home with eight minutes left to give Brighton a share of the points.

The result leaves Villa in ninth and Brighton in 10th.

"We've been in that position a few times this season and we've failed to see it out," a disappointed Watkins said.

APPTI

OTHER RESULT

• Aston Villa 2 Brighton 2

Relegation is a possibility: Amorim

"Of course, I didn't choose the players specifically for that position, but that I already knew," Amorim said.

"But I understand that they have a lot of difficulties, because they spend two years playing one way, and then they are playing another, and with a lot of losses."

"But I have to sell my idea. I don't have another one."

Reuters



A dejected Manchester United manager Ruben Amorim after the loss to Newcastle on Monday. (Reuters)

Maa jaisi shakti bhi,
suddha bhi.



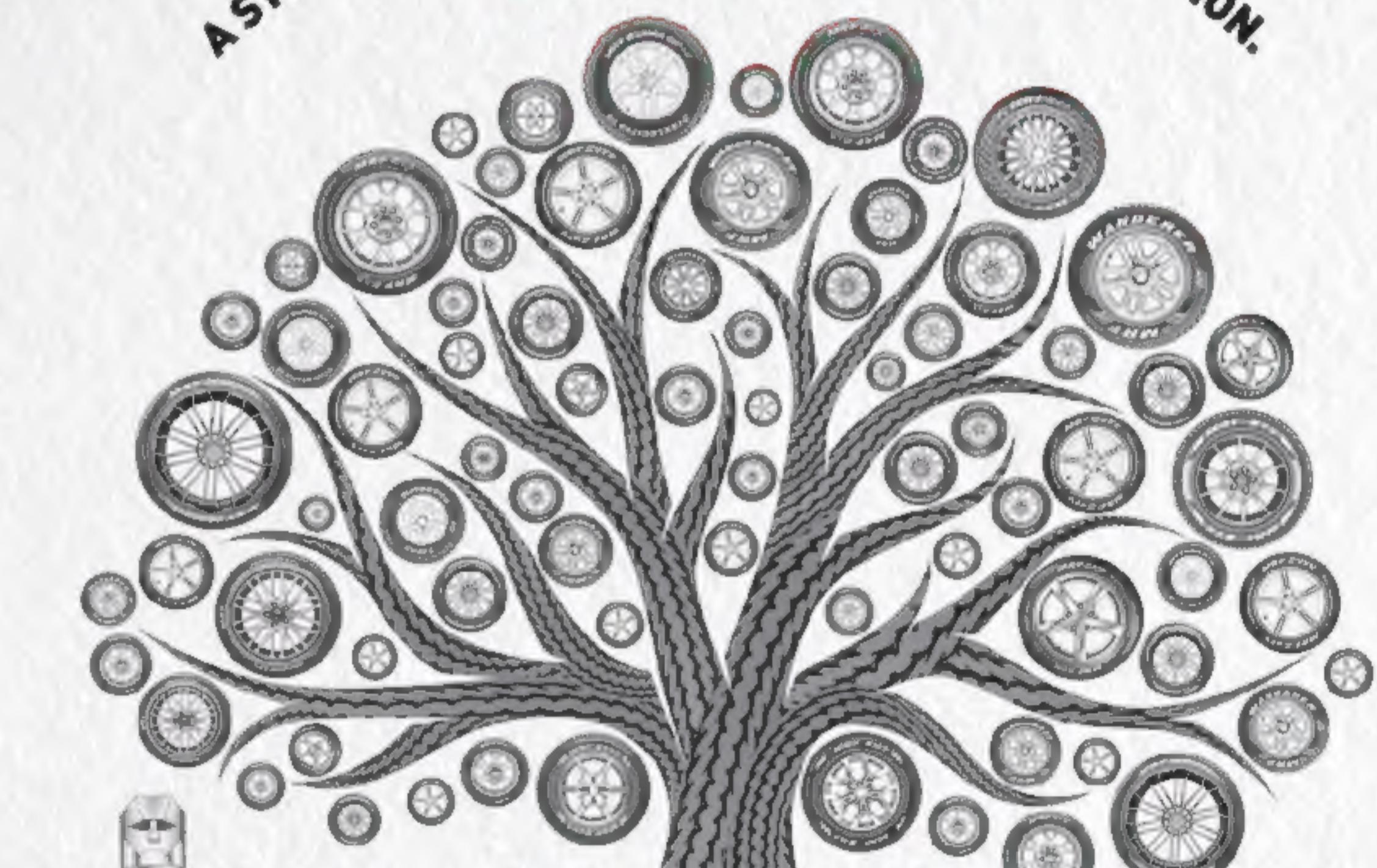
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Robi Hansda celebrates with teammates after scoring the winner for Bengal in the Santosh Trophy final on Tuesday, in a picture posted on X

Robi takes Bengal to 33rd crown

SANTOSH TROPHY FINAL

BENGAL	1
KERALA	0

OUR BUREAU

dominated at this stage. In recent times, however, seven-time winners Kerala have had the edge over their eastern rivals, winning the 2017-18 and the 2021-22 titles by defeating Bengal in the final.

State sports minister Aroop Biswas lauded the Bengal squad for their achievement.

So did Trinamul Congress national general secretary and MP Abhishek Banerjee.

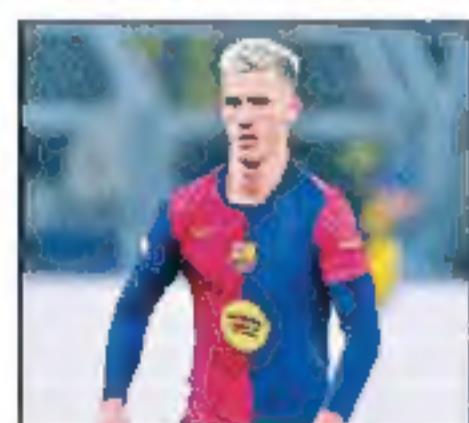
"Bengal has once again etched its name in history by clinching the Santosh Trophy for a record 33rd time, defeating Kerala in a hard-fought final with a solitary goal by Robi Hansda."

This victory feels personal as six players from Diamond Harbour Football Club (DHFC) — Naro Hari Shrestha, Rabilal Mandi, Ayon Mondal, Supriya Pandit, Vishal Das and Suprodipt Hazra — were part of the squad, with four of them featuring in today (Tuesday)'s match," Abhishek wrote on his X handle.

Robi found the back of the net with an easy finish from point-blank range after Aditya Thappa headed the ball into the box.

Both the sides have shown form befitting of their stature in the tournament, winning nine of their 10 matches, while drawing one each during their march to the title clash.

Historically, Bengal have



Dani Olmo

Barcelona: Barcelona have lost another appeal for the precautionary registration of Dani Olmo for the rest of the season on Monday, one day before the deadline to register the Spanish international.

Barcelona signed Olmo in August for around €55 million euros (\$57.22 million) but with the club unable to meet La Liga's wage cap, the attacking midfielder was registered for the first half of the season only.

The four-month allowance is set to expire at the end of the month.

The club managed to register Olmo after long-term injuries kept the first team players out of the squad for months, allowing Barca to allocate a

portion of their wages to register the 26-year-old, along with forward Pau Victor.

On Friday, the Commercial Court number 10 of Barcelona rejected the club's request to provisionally register Olmo, and the Court of First Instance number 47 of Barcelona has agreed with that ruling on Monday.

According to La Liga, the court rejected the precautionary registration of Olmo, since none of the necessary prerequisites for the adoption of the precautionary measure were

met.

Reuters